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ABSTRACT

This report documents results of Baltimore's Sandtown-Winchester Neighborhood Transformation (NT) Initiative, focusing on key decisions that helped shape the initiative. NT was one of the first attempts to systematically bring together diverse strands of thinking about comprehensive community change to overcome conditions that undermine impoverished communities. NT's partners (the mayor, the residents, and the Enterprise Foundation) focused the vision for change on eight key areas: physical development, economic development, health, education, family support, substance abuse, crime and safety, and community pride and spirit. Data for this report come from interviews, focus groups, review of relevant documents, and on-site observations. The lessons learned from the NT experience include: build on deep understanding of the neighborhood; invest in community capacity early; generate belief in ownership of the change; specify the rules of engagement; consider partnership with the public sector; embed community building in every activity; balance funding against pace and priorities; build residents' economic self-sufficiency; and use neighborhood-focused intermediaries to change systems. Abiding challenges include: altering the balance of power; acknowledging issues of race and class; showing respect; honoring residents' competence as leaders; and harnessing the community's spiritual strength. (SM)

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THE SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER

NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE:

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT COMMUNITY BUILDING & IMPLEMENTATION

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THE SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER

NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE:

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT COMMUNITY BUILDING & IMPLEMENTATION

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with support and funding from
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Acknowledgments

We wish to acknowledge our appreciation of the many people who candidly shared information and insights with us. All of those whom we interviewed seemed genuine in their commitment to bettering the community, regardless of the sector or role they represented. As one might expect, opinions differed substantially in some areas, but we actually found a remarkable degree of overall consistency across interviews with nearly 50 people. Their basic stories formed a compatible, if complex, larger narrative.

The leadership of Bart Harvey of The Enterprise Foundation and Ralph Smith of the Annie E. Casey Foundation was critical in guiding the development of this report from its conception to completion. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation, a long-time supporter of the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, also supported the development of the report. Our special thanks go to Mo Hoblitzell and Melanie Styles from The Enterprise Foundation for helping us define the review task and identify prospective interview candidates, and for shepherding us through the review process. Finally, the report benefited tremendously from the editorial skills of Leila Fiester.

We have been inspired by the vision, courage, and lasting commitment of the late Jim Rouse and former Baltimore mayor Kurt Schmoke, without whose passion little would have been risked on behalf of Sandtown-Winchester—and little would have been gained. We also honor the courage, hard work, and persistence of hundreds of residents, civic activists, churches, funders, public officials, city and Enterprise staff, service providers, and others who continue to toil daily to make positive and visible differences in the daily lives of Sandtown-Winchester residents and to build a better future for the community.

We hope that in some small way this review contributes to the progress of the work as it goes forward and to the efforts of like-minded individuals and organizations striving toward similar goals in other communities.

Foreword

Maryland developer Jim Rouse and his wife, Patty, founded The Enterprise Foundation in 1982 to use decent, affordable housing as a platform to help low-income people move up and out of poverty into the mainstream of American life. Jim Rouse became deeply convinced that the conditions that distress our cities—crime, drugs, joblessness, homelessness, unfit housing, and poverty—were "the cancers that eat into our economic health, raise the cost of government, and impair our labor force. They are a serious threat to our well-being as a nation." Jim Rouse believed that it was our moral obligation to overcome these conditions and that we know enough about what works to do so. He set out in 1990 to demonstrate what was possible in a specific community in Baltimore.

The former mayor of Baltimore, Kurt Schmoke, shared this vision, as did the residents of the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood in west Baltimore. In 1990, they joined with The Enterprise Foundation to simultaneously reform all of the neighborhood's broken systems (schools, health care, jobs, safety, and housing) in the belief that each system would strengthen the other, resulting in a transformed society. This initiative is known as Neighborhood Transformation.

Four key decisions helped to shape the initiative's future:

- City government was selected as a critical partner for Neighborhood Transformation, because city systems were to be the focus of reform. The partners thought that, for reforms to be achieved and sustained, local government needed to share the same vision and commitment.
- As a foundation, Enterprise chose to play a non-traditional role in the initiative. In addition to providing financial resources, Enterprise also had a daily presence in the neighborhood, providing on-site staffing and technical assistance.
- The city and Enterprise responded to the interests of Sandtown-Winchester residents and selected their community, even though it lacked a strong institutional anchor, such as a major employer or a well-established community development corporation.
- Based on the belief that no single organization was thought to best represent Sandtown-Winchester residents or strong enough to serve as the lead partner for the community, a new community-based organization was formed to coordinate the transformation effort.

This report documents the results of these decisions and others made about community building and implementation during the first 10 years of Neighborhood Transformation. As the report shows, the job of rebuilding Sandtown-Winchester is a dynamic, ongoing, and often difficult process, and we at The Enterprise Foundation remain firmly committed to that process. We decided to work with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to extract and disseminate lessons about the issues involved in creating and implementing comprehensive community change. Our goal is to learn from the lessons detailed in this report, and to continue to share our experiences so that others may learn as well.

We encourage you to read our story to understand the complexities inherent in such an undertaking, learn from our mistakes, and build on our successes. Our hope is that this report will promote meaningful, candid dialogue about effective ways to work with local governments and residents to transform distressed communities. In the words of Jim Rouse, "What ought to be, can be, if we have the will to make it so."

F. Barton Harvey III
Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer
The Enterprise Foundation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE FIRST 10 YEARS of the Sandtown-Winchester Neighborhood Transformation (NT) Initiative tell a story of great achievement and equally great struggle. The partners faced many surprises and tensions as they pursued their goals for social change. The decisions they made—especially involving the difficult trade-offs they negotiated—offer valuable lessons for all comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs). This review explores the early strategies, issues, and implications that shaped these lessons.

NT was one of the first attempts to systematically bring together diverse strands of thinking about comprehensive community change. It began in 1990 with developer James Rouse's idea that it was possible to overcome the conditions that undermine impoverished communities. With help from then-Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke, residents, and The Enterprise Foundation, NT's partners focused this vision for change on eight key areas: physical development, economic development, health, education, family support, substance abuse, crime and safety, and community pride and spirit.

NT was driven by several core components, including a comprehensive vision for ending poverty; a strategy that simultaneously addressed social, economic, and physical conditions; partnerships that linked the public and private sectors; a commitment to building capacity and ownership within individuals and the community; and efforts to leverage public will and investment—both financial and political—on behalf of social change.

Each partner in NT—the mayor, the residents, and The Enterprise Foundation—was expected to invest in the initiative. The city would provide resources and support from its agencies. The foundation would facilitate the process by bringing together stakeholders, raising funds, and providing management and technical support. Community members were expected to identify goals, bring internal resources to bear on key priorities, and lead local change efforts.

Those relationships and investments produced several notable achievements:

- Six intermediaries were created to facilitate improvements in housing, health care, education, employment, and other public services.
- More than 1,000 affordable-housing units were renovated or built.
- Two elementary schools showed significant improvements in test scores. The schools participate in a compact that requires curriculum change; teacher training; increased parent involvement; the use of direct-instruction techniques; and preschool, after-school, and summer school programs.
- Streets became significantly cleaner and safer because of improved city sanitation and public safety services.
- Medical and mental health services and computer labs were established in Sandtown's schools.
- Hundreds of residents received job training and placement.
- A community market opened, and a monthly community newspaper was founded.
- More than $70 million in new funds was committed to community improvements by federal programs such as Healthy Start and the Empowerment Zone initiative.

But NT became more complex as implementation progressed and partners faced the enormous challenge of acting on all fronts at once. Collaborators found themselves simultaneously raising funds, gleaning information about best practices from sources around the country, building an infrastructure to support many types of change, recruiting technical experts, and initiating project activities. Internal conflicts between established organizations and grassroots partners reemerged. And NT's ambitious, resident-driven vision for change created high expectations that were hard to meet.

Enterprise staff and consultants, under pressure to produce outcomes, began to play a larger role in translating NT's vision into action and in raising the funds needed to support their plans. Several vehicles were created to facilitate this work, including The Enterprise Foundation's Neighborhood Transformation Center (NTC), Community Building in Partnership, Inc. (CBP), and other intermediaries to implement specific activities.

Through this process, NT's partners learned hard lessons about getting started, implementing plans, and sustaining change. In some cases, the lessons reinforce NT's choices; in others they suggest an alternative approach. The lessons described here pertain to community building and NT's implementation process.[1]

There is much more that we can learn from NT as the city, Enterprise, and residents continue to explore their assumptions and practices. As this report shows, the strategies and relationships that emerge are complex and sometimes contradictory—but the challenges can be addressed in ways that produce significant and lasting results. The lessons presented in this report offer a starting point for moving forward.

Summary of Lessons

Lesson 1: Build on a Deep Understanding of the Neighborhood. Efforts to develop relationships between neighborhoods and external partners take time and care. Each side must learn about the other's aspirations, resources, limitations, and realities. This means entering the community slowly and getting to know its history and culture, paying attention to the community's diversity, basing strategies on the neighborhood's specific conditions, and building trust by setting short-term, achievable goals.

Lesson 2: Invest in Community Capacity Early. Strong leadership, the collective effectiveness of residents, and a stable infrastructure of resource-rich organizations all play a vital role in transforming neighborhoods. Efforts to build these capacities should be an integral part of every program component. Plans should include investments in community-organizing strategies that connect residents and develop shared agendas. The initiative should provide operating support, technical assistance, and coaching for promising community institutions and their leaders. And changes should grow at a pace commensurate with the community's capacities to carry them forward.

[1] For information on NT programs for education, economic development, housing, safety, and other areas, please see the "Community Building in Partnership" chapter in *On the Ground with Comprehensive Community Initiatives*, a study of the major programs of 10 initiatives published by The Enterprise Foundation in 2000. For the complete text, visit www.enterprisefoundation.org.

Lesson 3: Generate Belief in and Ownership of the Change. Hope, belief, and commitment are powerful vehicles for social change. However, it is essential to manage stakeholders' expectations so that people both believe that change is possible and see concrete evidence that it can occur. Effective approaches include a broad-based planning effort that activates and energizes the community and the involvement of local stakeholders in translating the vision into practical goals and strategies.

Lesson 4: Establish a Clear Decision-Making Process Early. Decisions about who will control the transformation process, set criteria for action, and determine the timeline for change are always messy and challenging. This is especially true for community initiatives that unite powerful institutions with traditionally powerless communities.

Lesson 5: Specify the Rules of Engagement. When problems arise, partners tend to revert to their own assumptions and priorities unless the group has specified clear roles, expectations, and rules for holding members accountable to common goals. It is especially important to set rules for distributing power among partners. This requires collaborators to understand the conditions under which partners operate, to negotiate agreement among partners on key responsibilities, to embed goals and expectations within each partner's bureaucracies, and to establish a process for reviewing and modifying the partnership.

Lesson 6: Consider Partnership with the Public Sector. Public-sector involvement can be a mixed blessing, and therefore it bears careful consideration. The public entity's resources and authority should complement the initiative's agenda, and the initiative must be able to manage the public partners in a productive way.

Lesson 7: Embed Community Building in Every Activity. Community building must have a clear and vital role in all implementation activities, and that role should be enforced. The trick lies in managing the pressure to show immediate results while still nurturing the capacity of residents to produce long-term changes and the capacity of partner organizations to improve their own knowledge, skills, and systems.

Lesson 8: Ground Expectations in an Explicit Strategy. An implementation strategy helps partners understand each other's limits and negotiate priorities. The strategy should clarify all partners' assumptions about how the initiative will produce change. It should be based on well-informed decisions. It should incorporate indicators for assessing progress. And the strategy should realistically reflect the partnership's capacity and resources.

Lesson 9: Balance Funding Against Pace and Priorities. The initiative's vision, priorities, and schedule must drive decisions about whose money to seek, when to accept it, and how to use it. In particular, partners must engage in a continual process of educating funders. They must build in financial support for capacity building among residents and organizations. They must avoid setting up false expectations. And they should share decisions about fundraising with a broad group of stakeholders.

Lesson 10: Nurture Connections Among People, Ideas, and Institutions. Complex problems require solutions that reach across a community's physical, economic, and social sectors. Solid solutions build on three elements: coordinated interactions among people, institutions, ideas, and information; shared responsibility among stakeholders for making and maintaining connections; and effective communication with the community.

Lesson 11: Build Residents' Economic Self-Sufficiency. Residents' economic self-sufficiency must be a priority from the beginning, and it must follow a strategy that is grounded in the larger regional economy. The strategy should recognize local markets, economic development supports, and entry points for economic revitalization. It also should exploit potential connections between employment and all other initiative activities.

Lesson 12: Use Neighborhood-Focused Intermediaries to Change Systems. Skilled intermediaries are grounded in residents' experience, have reform-minded partners, and attract effective leaders. Such organizations also must have dedicated and skilled staff, plans for connecting neighborhood-level change with broader policies and practices, access to resources, and top-level supporters in the public and private sector who can implement new strategies.

Lesson 13: Create a Culture of Learning and Self-Assessment. Continuous learning gives the partners in CCIs a chance to reflect on community conditions, assess their progress, and refine strategies. Information about how an initiative is changing also can be a significant tool for recruiting new leaders and partners, building community investment, making difficult but necessary choices, and expanding the capacity of all collaborators.

Abiding Challenges

Challenge 1: Altering the Balance of Power. At the heart of lasting social change lies a shift in power that enables residents to mobilize resources, influence rules, and control the institutions and systems that affect their lives. Yet nothing is more difficult for outside entities to support than this change in power relationships.

Challenge 2: Acknowledging Issues of Race and Class. An undercurrent of tensions around race and class often runs through exchanges between poor communities of color and mainstream institutions. It is essential to acknowledge these tensions, if not to resolve them, to build trust among collaborators.

Challenge 3: Showing Respect. Residents expect their external partners to respect them—to be able to listen and learn, to be willing to acknowledge their own limitations, to be aware of residents' experiences, and to be committed to honest engagement. Respect has many permutations for community residents. It assumes racial tones when a person of color perceives disrespect from a white person. And it takes on broader importance if outsiders seem not to understand or appreciate the conditions of people living in poor neighborhoods, regardless of their color.

Challenge 4: Honoring Residents' Competence as Leaders. Comprehensive community initiatives require many kinds of competence. The skills that produce success in the mainstream economic and social worlds are important, but so are the skills that enable residents of poor communities to survive in hostile and dispiriting circumstances. It isn't easy to find an appropriate balance between these types of skills, however. Residents often feel that outsiders discount their leadership skills or underestimate their ability to learn. The external partners, meanwhile, are caught between assisting residents and preparing them to take over their own leadership.

Challenge 5: Harnessing the Community's Spiritual Strength. Faith is a vital asset in some poor communities, and one that can drive neighborhood transformation. Although it is not always easy to recognize and harness spiritual strength, awareness that community transformation operates at many levels—including the spiritual—and that religious faith can be a huge resource for change, is important.

Figure 1: Timeline of Major Events for the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative

Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD); Enterprise; city, state, and federal governments join Nehemiah Housing partnership. Sandtown Habitat for Humanity begins work. Mayor Schmoke and Jim Rouse agree to undertake NT.
150 people attend community forum to report on workgroup plans. Sandtown-Winchester Community Center opens. Baltimore Project becomes Healthy Start, an HHS-funded program to reduce low birthweight. Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU), a federally funded program for youth, begins.
"Puzzle Book" is disseminated. Mayor announces the Sandtown 600 Project at community meeting in Sandtown. Community Building in Partnership, Inc. (CBP), and Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) are established. CBP's Family Assistance Network opens at Sandtown-Winchester Community Center. Johns Hopkins Blood Pressure Project begins.
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
400 Sandtown residents attend community meeting to begin NT planning. Work groups develop visions and agendas in eight areas. Baltimore receives HUD funds to modernize 571 units at the Gilmor Homes. Baltimore Project, an outreach program for pregnant and young mothers, begins.
Sandtown-Winchester Community Development Corporation (SWCDC) created.
Vision for Health (VFH) consortium established. New Compact Schools resolution adopted and project begins. Sandtown-Winchester *Viewpoint* begins publication. YOU ends; Urban Youth Corps and Youth Build training programs for youth begin. Home Instructional Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) initiated. New Song Academy and EDEN Jobs open.

1995

Three elementary-school-based clinics open. Compact Schools Summer Institutes begin. Compact Schools Project awarded $1 million Annenberg Foundation grant.

1996

Newly renovated Avenue Market opens. Sandtown Works, CBP's employment center, opens. CBP receives $1 million HUD grant for Family Investment Center Empowerment Zone's Self-Motivated Community People's Village Center forms. New Song Community Health Center opens.

1997

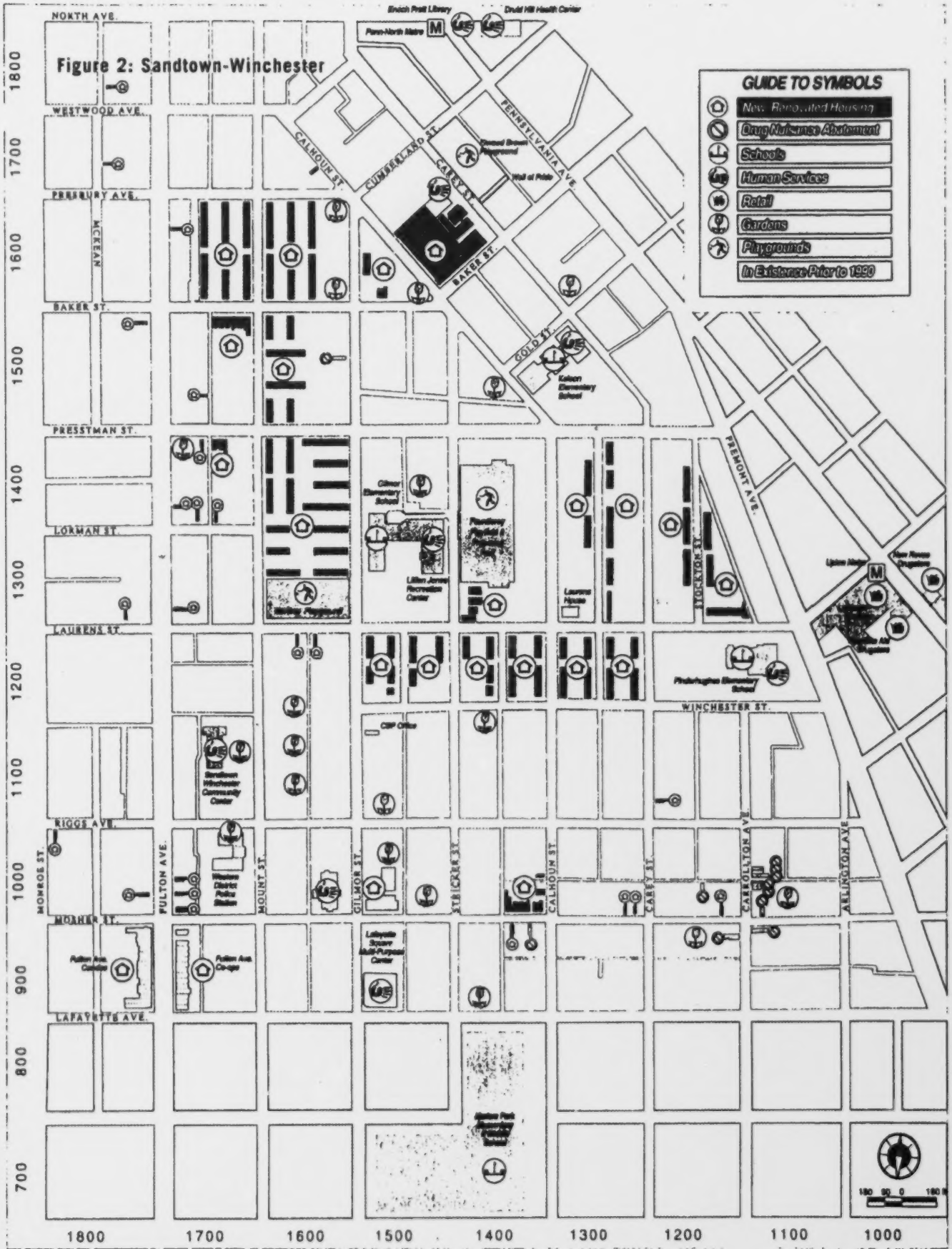
Direct instruction introduced in two Sandtown schools. Jobs-Plus, an employment and training demonstration, opens in Gilmor Homes. Americorps Community Safety Project begins.

1998

Environmental Enterprises Inc., a recycling business, opens. VFH receives $2 million Community Voices grant from Kellogg. Direct instruction begins in third school.

1999

Sandtown-Winchester Environmental Education Program (SWEEP) begins. Association of Sandtown-Winchester Contractors (ASWC) established. Neighborhood Transformation Center (NTC) joins Enterprise's Baltimore office. Compact Schools Project receives another $1 million Annenberg grant.



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THE SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSFORMATION (NT) INITIATIVE is one of the most significant and enduring comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) in the nation. NT's vision and experience have challenged and guided practitioners, researchers, program planners, and policymakers. The initiative has stimulated stakeholders across the country to aim for ambitious goals, find new ways to tackle old problems, and improve opportunities for social change.

This review of NT's first 10 years examines its progress and draws lessons from its struggles and successes. It also provides an opportunity for the initiative's partners and practitioners to reflect on their strategies, achievements, and future directions. This overview provides context for that discussion by clarifying the issues, beliefs, and experience that shape all CCI. This overview does not address the effectiveness of programs implemented under the NT initiative, including education, economic development, housing, safety, and other topics.[2]

[2]For program information, please see the "Community Building in Partnership" chapter of *On the Ground with Comprehensive Community Initiatives*, a study of the major programs of 10 community initiatives published by The Enterprise Foundation in 2000. For the complete text, visit www.enterprisefoundation.org.

Issues That Comprehensive Community Initiatives Face

The CCI approach to community change is inherently complex and challenging. It requires people to think comprehensively, work collaboratively, and address problems at many levels. It tries to engage partners from diverse sectors—from residents to policymakers—while also recognizing the need to build their capacity for change. Those characteristics force CCIs to balance many tensions, often trading one important benefit for another in an effort to move forward.

CCIs also are deeply influenced by external constraints. Their decisions and actions must accommodate practical factors, such as the availability of resources, information, and opportunities, and the roles, perceptions, and capacities of the initiative's partners. In Sandtown-Winchester's case, the initiative also was affected by the expectations of funders, the political needs of elected officials, the limited authority and jurisdiction of public entities, shifts in the larger economy, and the difficult dynamics of race and class. Negotiating among these competing interests requires constant attention and skill. It means that clear and consistent progress is hard to achieve, and that it may be impossible to make ideal decisions or resolve all tensions.

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The subtle and serious issues that CCIs face raise several difficult questions about social learning and change:

- When do you move ahead quickly to help people in dire need, and when do you work more slowly to build their own capacity for problem solving?
- Can you change a neighborhood in incremental stages, or does everything have to improve at once?
- How do you work with government over time in a way that accommodates the bureaucracy's limitations without compromising your larger vision?
- How do you create new opportunities for communities to work with external partners while also building on the work of internal leaders, organizations, associations, and networks?
- How do you successfully market an initiative and attract resources while acknowledging and addressing missteps so that learning and growth can occur?
- How do you balance the need for highly sophisticated management with the need to foster the administrative and leadership skills of residents?
- How do you build and maintain effective partnerships among people who have inherently unequal status and power?

These issues force CCIs to follow a natural course of trial and error—and, ideally, to use the tensions and inevitable trade-offs as opportunities to reflect on the initiative's needs and progress. Accordingly, the lessons we draw from the Sandtown-Winchester NT initiative are the lessons of hard-won experience, not criticisms or evidence of fatal flaws. They also serve as evidence that, sometimes, the questions we ask are as important as the answers we find.

History of Comprehensive Community Initiatives

CCIs emerged in the late 1980s from the frustration that service providers, program planners, and funders felt about the limited impact of single-focus housing and service interventions for residents of poor neighborhoods. A growing number of practitioners and policymakers came to believe that real solutions to poverty required attention to a dense web of community factors, ranging from physical infrastructure to economic and social opportunities, education, health, race, and culture. The complexity and interdependence of these factors called for a response that could connect multiple programs, resources, and approaches.

At the same time, ideas crystallized around the importance of individual efficacy—of families having greater control over their own progress, and of residents and neighborhoods exercising that control effectively. Intervention planners realized that programs alone did not build individuals' strengths; too often, in fact, they emphasized clients' deficits and fostered dependency on services. Social capital—the quality and characteristics of social relationships and interactions—was increasingly recognized as a powerful factor in individual and family well-being and hence the outcomes of social programs. Efforts to turn these ideas into action were increasingly referred to as community building.

A 1997 report on CCIs by the Aspen Institute, *Voices from the Field*, noted that the diverse array of CCIs all shared two fundamental beliefs: Comprehensive approaches are beneficial, and community capacity and control are essential components of community change. A primary challenge for CCIs has been to honor both principles—to not only achieve program goals but to do so through methods that enhance democratic citizenship.

Despite early progress, CCIs have struggled to face tough challenges. In *Stories of Renewal*, Joan Walsh noted that CCIs' "powerful sponsors set unrealistic goals, which lead to disappointment on all sides when goals aren't met." *Voices from the Field* further suggested that comprehensiveness may be "too broad and difficult to operationalize" fully, and that it may be most useful as "a lens that allows [a community] the freedom to pick strategically."

In addition, the theory of CCIs developed without a clear understanding of how the theory would be implemented. The people on the front lines of implementation now realize that blending theory with practice often means creating a learning environment in which residents and their community-building partners negotiate tensions, learn from them, and use the lessons to improve conditions and practices. In some ways, this learning process—and the capacity it builds—can be more important for neighborhood transformation than simply implementing a set of model activities.

During the past decade, significant developments in the theory and practice of CCIs have included the following:

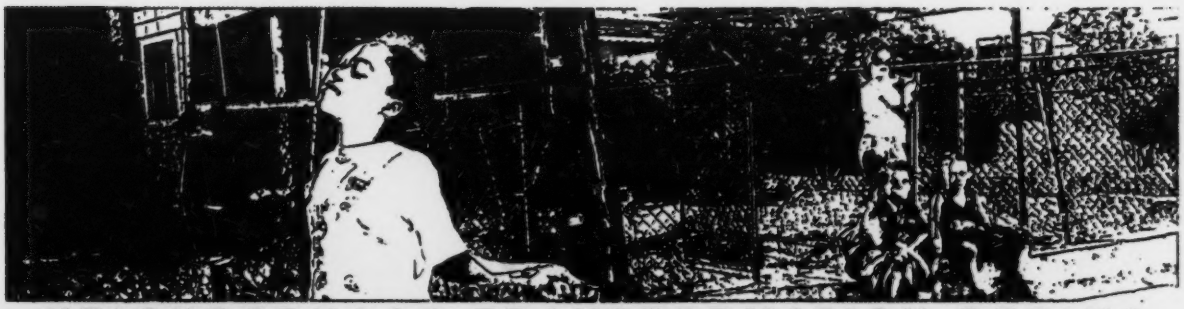
- Greater appreciation for how a neighborhood's economy fits (or does not fit) into the larger regional economy, and its implications for employment options and economic viability within that neighborhood
- Deepening experience with various interventions needed to increase resident employment, especially job readiness, access, maintenance, and advancement
- Renewed attention to the hidden consequences of racial barriers and the hidden opportunities within social and economic structures
- More seasoned judgments about the investments needed to revitalize neighborhoods, including time and resources
- A growing awareness of the stages of project implementation, the importance of strategic sequencing, and the realistic expectations appropriate to each
- More open discussion about the roles, limitations, and responsibilities of foundations and other external partners and intermediaries

No major CCI has had an easy time wrestling with those issues. Yet the promise of comprehensive community change appears more possible now—if also more modest in ambition—than it did a decade ago. CCIs are still in the early stages of development; the Sandtown-Winchester NT, for example, is just completing its first phase of implementation. But there is sufficient experience on the ground to reconsider NT's theory and assumptions; examine its initial outcomes and changes in context; revise its direction, approaches, and goals; and celebrate its accomplishments. In that process, NT can contribute to the evolving theory and practice of the CCI field.

Scope of This Review

The short-term study presented here draws from a carefully chosen but limited number of sources: 42 interviews, two focus groups (one with five former NT or Enterprise Foundation consultants and a second with seven original NT resident advocates), a review of relevant documents, and on-site observations. The research team based its review on the initiative's facts and events, focusing on issues and lessons that hold the most promise for the field of comprehensive community change.

We did not study the effectiveness of the program areas beyond community building and the general implementation process. We made no attempt to draw the kinds of conclusions that an empirical evaluation might generate or to tell the definitive story of NT. We did not independently validate the outcomes reported to us, so we cannot attribute them with confidence to the work of NT, compare them with outcomes of other initiatives, or establish cause and effect.



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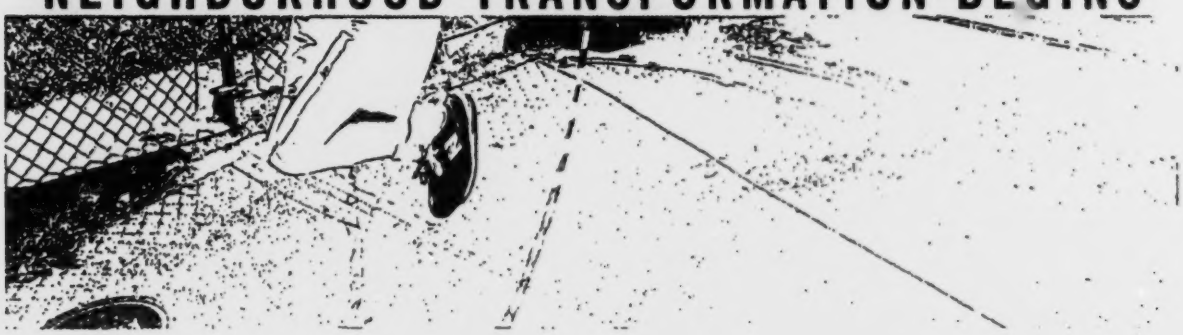

THE SANDTOWN-WINCHESTER COMMUNITY lies just west of downtown Baltimore, Maryland. In 1990, its approximately 10,300 residents faced many of the symptoms of social distress that plague other low-income urban communities, including high rates of housing vacancy and abandonment, unemployment, substance abuse, violent crime, and school dropout. But Sandtown's predominantly African-American residents also possessed a rich history of traditions and leadership, a sense of community, and—with their proximity to the downtown area—the potential for development.

The Neighborhood Transformation (NT) Initiative that built on Sandtown's strengths grew from the commitments of two different men and their institutions: Kurt Schmoke, mayor of Baltimore; and Jim Rouse, founder of The Enterprise Foundation and the Rouse Development Company. Each leader's vision, political will, relationships, resources, and experiences shaped the development and early implementation of the transformation effort.

The Leaders

In 1988, Schmoke became the first African-American mayor of Baltimore. One of Schmoke's active supporters during his campaign was BUILD (Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development), a group affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation, which had a broad municipal agenda and a base on the city's west side. BUILD's commitment to Nehemiah Housing, a program to help low-income families purchase homes, provided part of the impetus for NT. This collaborative project linked BUILD; the foundation; and the city, state, and federal governments in a partnership to construct 210 new housing units and rehabilitate 17 existing units in Sandtown-Winchester. The partners raised or contributed $28.4 million in interest-free loans for low-income home buyers, low-interest mortgage financing, land, site clearance, and municipal services. In 1990, the partnership led to creation of the Enterprise Nehemiah Development Corporation, a joint venture of BUILD and Enterprise.

During the same period, housing and commercial real estate developer Jim Rouse was thinking about mounting a major initiative in a Baltimore neighborhood to demonstrate that poverty could be eliminated. A successful demonstration would convince policymakers and other leaders that such community investment could produce long-term financial and social payoffs for the public sector, Rouse believed.

Rouse's roots in the city were broad and deep. Among many notable projects, he had transformed the decaying Baltimore harbor into a successful commercial and tourist destination known as Harborplace. Rouse's Enterprise Foundation, one of the country's leading community development intermediaries, had a significant record of establishing affordable housing in Baltimore and around the nation.

Schmoke, BUILD, Rouse, and The Enterprise Foundation shared a belief that decent housing was a vital element of community revitalization but not the only one. A comprehensive effort to get at the roots of poverty would have to address other key factors, including education, employment, health, and safety. When Schmoke and Rouse began talking about developing a comprehensive approach in a targeted neighborhood, their only point of disagreement was where to mount the initiative.

The Vision

- The goal of NT is to build a viable, working neighborhood in which residents are empowered to direct and sustain their community's physical, social, and economic development.
- All public and private support systems—including housing, education, employment, health care, and public safety—are directed to help residents achieve self-sufficiency and maximize their potential.
- The renewal effort ultimately will create a quality of life in Sandtown-Winchester that is desirable and provides for economic self-determination, which will fulfill current residents and potentially attract new community members.

Rouse favored a community on Baltimore's east side, near Johns Hopkins Medical Center. He reasoned that the large and powerful anchor institution could help sustain the venture over time. Schmoke, however, wanted to produce results that could be generalized to neighborhoods without such a resource. He also wanted to extend his previous work with BUILD in west Baltimore. The partners eventually agreed upon Sandtown-Winchester on the city's west side.

The Concept

NT was influenced by the strands of thinking that shaped many comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs), but it also was one of the first attempts to bring those ideas together in a systematic way. In early 1990, Mayor Schmoke appointed a task force to design a "neighborhood-driven" planning process that could transform the neighborhood. The task force, with representatives from Enterprise, BUILD, the city, and the Sandtown-Winchester community, was introduced at a public meeting attended by 400 Sandtown residents. The first phase of community planning involved more than 500 residents in public meetings, work groups, an assessment of local needs and capacities, and community organizing.

With help from facilitators and resource staff from the city and Enterprise, resident-led planning groups identified their vision for change in eight key areas: physical development, economic development, health, education, family support, substance abuse, crime and safety, and community pride and spirit. The process culminated in May 1991 with a forum, attended by 150 people, to present the work groups' recommendations. The vision and goals identified by the planning groups were also published in a document known as the "Puzzle Book" because it outlined various interlocking pieces of the community transformation challenge.

The Components

The plans for transforming Sandtown reflected the following core beliefs:

A COMPREHENSIVE VISION. NT asserted that the solutions to poverty, like the conditions of poverty itself, are interrelated and therefore require a comprehensive approach. The vision or "dream" of ending poverty links and drives the various solutions.

AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING STRATEGY. NT sought to change outcomes for Sandtown residents by addressing social, economic, and physical conditions simultaneously. This meant not only improving service delivery at the neighborhood level but also using those changes to model and initiate larger systems change.

PARTNERSHIP. The long-standing partnership between the mayor, residents, and Enterprise was NT's central instrument for change. Each partner was expected to devote special attention, energy, and resources to the

initiative. The city would provide resources and support from its agencies. The foundation would facilitate the process by bringing together stakeholders, raising funds, and providing management and technical support. Community members were expected to identify goals, bring internal resources to bear on key priorities, and lead local change efforts.

INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY CAPACITY AND OWNERSHIP. NT developers intended to make community building a central vehicle for initiating and sustaining change. They hoped to use all activities to engage residents and build local leadership.

FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL LEVERAGE. NT advocated public and private financial investment as a way of producing long-term tax savings. Such investment was expected to stimulate change, redirect and increase the effectiveness of government funds, and decrease the financial costs of neglect. Powerful individuals were expected to leverage public will and investment on behalf of the initiative.

In 1991, with the goals and vision established, NT collaborators began planing to implement the changes they sought in major systems and programs. Four "program design clusters," composed of residents, staff from the city and Enterprise, and experienced planners, were organized to address the areas of community building, physical and economic development, health and human services, and education. Several community-building efforts and short-term projects were initiated, such as block organizing for public safety, development of a Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) program, and creation of school improvement teams. During the next two years, these clusters developed action plans that reflected the goals outlined in the "Puzzle Book." The emergence of the planning clusters coincided with completion of the Nehemiah Housing project and the subsequent decrease in BUILD's presence in Sandtown.

Early Implementation

NT became more complex as it moved into implementation, and the partners faced the enormous challenge of acting on all fronts at once. Collaborators found themselves simultaneously raising funds, gleaning information about best practices from sources around the country, building an infrastructure to support many types of change, recruiting technical experts, and initiating project activities. In addition, NT's ambitious, resident-driven vision for change created high expectations that were hard to meet.

Enterprise staff and consultants, under pressure to produce outcomes, began to play a larger role in translating NT's vision into action and in finding the resources needed to support those plans. Several vehicles were created to facilitate this work, including The Enterprise Foundation's Neighborhood Transformation Center (NTC), Community Building in Partnership, Inc. (CBP), and other intermediaries that implemented specific activities.

FACILITATING AND MANAGING CHANGE. NTC, located in downtown Baltimore, operated independently from Enterprise's other Baltimore office. NTC enlisted experts from around the country to help with program design, proposal writing, and documentation, while the center's small staff focused on fundraising and project coordination. NTC eventually increased its staff size to eight and developed more in-house capacity for evaluation, technical assistance, advocacy, project management, and other tasks.

CBP, an independent, nonprofit organization, was established to serve as a "facilitating leader to ensure the effective implementation, coordination, and monitoring of all of the transformation activities in the neighborhood." Its 11-member board (later expanded to 19), all appointed by the mayor, consisted primarily of neighborhood residents along with city administrators and other stakeholders. The city provided substantial in-kind support to CBP; the commissioner of Housing and Community Development served as board chairman, and a city staff person served as CBP director.

CBP assumed management of the Sandtown-Winchester Community Center and its growing menu of programs and services. CBP also published the monthly Sandtown-Winchester *Viewpoint*, which circulated to 3,000 community members, and it sponsored public safety, community outreach, and holiday activities. At its peak, CBP had a staff of 53, most of whom were community residents.

IMPLEMENTING SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES. One of the challenges that NT faced was identifying vehicles through which it could implement its comprehensive agenda. Eventually, Enterprise and its collaborators created four intermediaries, in addition to CBP, to address specific issues of housing, health, education, and employment:

- The Neighborhood Development Center (NDC), established in 1993, is a free-standing nonprofit organization that coordinates housing development and generates resources in Sandtown. NDC participates in community planning, training, and technical assistance and serves as a project developer.
- The Vision for Health (VFH) consortium, formed in 1994, is a community-based health care collaborative that links public and private partners. VFH brought four major health care providers together with the Baltimore City Health Department and CBP to promote high-quality health care for Sandtown residents.
- The Compact Schools, a partnership among Sandtown's three public elementary schools, the public school system, and Enterprise, was established in 1994 to improve education outcomes. Over time, their work focused on teacher development and curriculum reform.
- Sandtown Works, a job readiness and limited job placement program, opened in 1996. It merged in 1999 with EDEN Jobs, an employment placement program operated by New Song Community Church, in order to provide seamless access to training in life skills and job readiness in addition to job placement and retention services.

As NT implementation moved into high gear, these intermediaries generated accomplishments in many areas—but they also encountered some persistent tensions and contradictions. The lessons in the next pages are drawn from the decisions and compromises that NT made to overcome implementation obstacles and to achieve its goals.

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER:

Building Local Capacity Along with Affordable Housing

NDC was established in 1993 to help NT's housing, commercial development, and open-space agendas move from vision to action. NDC's early efforts focused on building and renovating affordable housing units in Sandtown-Winchester. The center formed partnerships with city and state departments and private lending institutions, established cooperative agreements, raised funds, and built or improved a series of housing units that came to be known as the Sandtown 600. Although NDC made substantial progress toward its goal, the housing units are scattered throughout Sandtown-Winchester and they had little apparent influence on the overall neighborhood or on local development capacity.

In 1999, NDC refocused its approach on building community ownership and capacity. The center's new director asked a longtime community activist to assemble a group of residents to develop a master plan. Housing experts examined every property in Sandtown-Winchester and determined which blocks should be rehabilitated, demolished, or refurbished and how open space should be used. The group presented its plan to the community in four evening meetings, attended by a total of 325 residents. The residents formed focus groups to hammer out the plan's details, and they reached consensus on most issues. They ultimately presented the plan to various funders, who accepted it as the blueprint for Sandtown's development.

The process of developing the master plan generated consensus and excitement. One of the best outcomes was an energized group of about 35 residents with a new idea for Sandtown-Winchester: a community land trust. The trust appealed to residents as a vehicle for taking ownership of vacant sites and properties that were scheduled to be demolished. This resident-controlled entity is expected to make critical decisions about property use (e.g., garden, parking lot, or park) and long-term maintenance. The land trust's first projects involved planning four to six community gardens and parks.

NDC's work faced some challenges. From its inception, the center's sphere of work addressed both local development capacity and housing. The pressure to quickly generate a significant number of housing units made it hard to devote substantial attention to the capacity-building agenda. Neighborhood contractors were frustrated that neither residents nor local businesses were capturing the economic benefit of housing development in the community.

In 1999, with NDC's support, the contractors organized the Association of Sandtown-Winchester Contractors, which has since become the Association for Professional Contractors (APC). NDC works with APC to support business and construction management and to help members obtain bonding and insurance, gain access to working capital, and increase the volume of their contracts. NDC sees its work with the contractors as one of several strategies for increasing the community's investment in and ownership of its housing and open space.

GETTING STARTED: THE EARLY LESSONS

EVERY INITIATIVE'S LEADERS face some of their toughest and most significant choices in their very first decisions. The ideas and issues they put on the table—or leave off—and the goals and beliefs that influence their choices all have lasting effects on the initiative's development.

These early decisions force partners to address some basic but crucial questions: *Where should we work? How soon should we start? With whom do we form partnerships? Where do we make our first investments? What are reasonable expectations? How do we engage the community? How much control are we willing to give up? How do we involve the public sector, foundations, or the private sector?*

The answers to these and other questions have profound implications for comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) because they establish the framework for decision making and action. They also send signals to the community about the kind of partnership that will evolve. The following lessons are based on the early steps taken by the Neighborhood Transformation (NT) Initiative. In some cases, the lessons reinforce NT's choices; in others they suggest an alternative approach.

Lesson 1: Build on a Deep Understanding of the Neighborhood

Efforts to build relationships between neighborhoods and external partners take time and care. Within neighborhoods, residents differ in their interests, experiences, socioeconomic positions, and views. It is therefore essential for each side to learn about the others' aspirations, resources, and limitations. Community change initiatives that build on mature relationships with neighborhoods can use this knowledge to design programs and strategies that match the community's needs, resources, and pace of implementation.

Although NT's leaders recognized Sandtown's many desirable attributes, including its rich history and dire need for development, each party had a different understanding of the other's capacities and assumptions about fundamental issues—and they didn't take time to work those differences out. As a result, in its early stages NT was not as closely linked to residents' strengths and potential as it might have been.

The importance of building understanding between Sandtown residents and their external partners was especially apparent when it came to community leadership.

Some outsiders thought the community lacked sophisticated leaders, but many residents thought the neighborhood already had many talented individuals, organizations, and informal networks in leadership roles. According to residents, the effectiveness of these community members was limited only by racial and class barriers and by their lack of access to resources outside the community. As one resident said, "They may not have been the kind of leaders that were ready on Day One to do everything at once according to Mr. Rouse's plan, but that doesn't mean there weren't leaders. ... Even after a community is ravaged of leadership, it still has leaders. You just have to get them where they are."

Differences in partners' assumptions about leadership intensified as NT moved toward implementation and as pressures mounted to produce results. The initiative would have benefited from efforts to build shared experiences and trust, understand neighborhood dynamics, and develop consensus on key issues before moving forward.

Implications of Lesson 1: Build on a Deep Understanding of the Neighborhood

- Enter a community slowly. Get to know its history, culture, needs, strengths, and informal leaders. Use this information to identify local leaders and institutions to work with and support.
- Pay attention to the community's diversity. Recognize that internal conflicts about resources, control, jobs, and recognition are inevitable. Build programs with this reality in mind.
- Base your approach on the neighborhood's specific conditions. Reinforce ongoing activities to test their viability and strength before developing alternative structures.
- Deepen partners' shared knowledge, trust, and confidence by targeting and achieving short-term, if modest, goals.

Lesson 2: Invest in Community Capacity Early

Community capacity—strong leadership, the collective effectiveness of residents, and a stable infrastructure of resource-rich organizations—plays a vital role in transforming neighborhoods. But it takes time, resources, and concentrated support to build capacity where it does not already exist, and these investments are best made before implementation.

Community organizing can be an important tool for mobilizing residents and developing leaders. Sustained community organizing connects residents with information, networks of like-minded stakeholders, practical experience, and opportunities to express their opinions. NT's leaders considered this process so important that they briefly considered delaying the initiative's formal launch to allow for several years of community organizing. Compelled by a sense of urgency and by concerns about the costs of lost opportunity, however, NT proceeded without a clear strategy for community organizing or an organized, effective communal voice. (Although Community Building in Partnership, Inc. [CBP], hired organizers to do some block-by-block organizing, and the effort successfully mobilized residents to address safety issues, the organizers' positions were slowly phased out due to a lack of funding.)

[Local] leaders early on wanted very modest things, and those could have been easily addressed. [NT] could have helped them to be better able to do their jobs. ... Nobody was meeting [the indigenous groups'] needs. We were taking a lot of their time but not being clear about responding to their organizational needs.

—NT OBSERVER

Early investment in a neighborhood's existing organizations and activities also lays a strong foundation for community change. In Sandtown-Winchester, NT leaders viewed the community structure as weak, so they created their own intermediary organizations to implement change. By not investing in indigenous organizations or using them strategically, however, NT missed an opportunity to build grassroots capacity and ownership—elements that are crucial for long-term success.

NT's experiences suggest that a modest amount of organizational support and sustained technical assistance can go a very long way with community institutions. It allows them to grow and improve at a pace they can manage, while slowly expanding their influence in sync with their capacity. In fact, as NT evolved it did begin to make strategic investments in local infrastructure, often with impressive results—as in the case of New Song Community Church (see page 41).

It is possible that NT's strategy of starting without first building community capacity might have worked better in east Baltimore, where Johns Hopkins Medical Center —a large, resource-rich partner—might have stimulated positive outcomes without extensive capacity-building. Even there, however, NT's success would have been influenced by the degree to which other community institutions and leaders were prepared and empowered to participate.

Implications of Lesson 2: Invest in Community Capacity Early

- Treat community capacity as a "product." Build it into your plans as a core operating expense and as an integral part of every program component.
- Make long-term investments in community organizing. Emphasize strategies that foster connections among residents, shared agendas, and group capacity to initiate change.
- Provide operating support, technical assistance, and coaching for promising community-based institutions. Identify entrepreneurial leaders and support them.
- Allow the initiative to grow at a pace commensurate with the community's capacities to carry it forward.

Lesson 3: Generate Belief in and Ownership of the Change

Hope, belief, and commitment are powerful vehicles for social change. Like many visionaries, Jim Rouse appreciated the power of conviction when it came to establishing new realities, and he often said that the greatest obstacle to neighborhood transformation was a lack of "belief." Rouse viewed community change as a profoundly human process, and he tried to fuel the hearts and minds of stakeholders with a larger sense of possibility.

Under Rouse's guidance, NT's partners worked hard to inspire people's hope in the future, break through apathy and perceived barriers, and foster willingness to struggle together toward common goals. The implementers' experience suggests the importance of simultaneously generating belief among local stakeholders and managing their expectations.

NT's early commitment to building belief in Sandtown-Winchester created community involvement, excitement, and the beginnings of substantial, broad-based ownership. Day after day and night after night, hundreds of residents participated in planning the transformation process. For the first time, residents were asked to share their dreams and opinions and were treated with dignity and respect. Residents felt the power of their own voices and the strength of their collective will, and they saw solutions develop that reflected their realities.

As the Sandtown residents began to feel a sense of possibility and hope, they found areas of agreement on topics that had previously produced conflict. New relationships and connections were established, and new leaders emerged. As one resident recalled, "It was exhilarating for me. I could work hard for this. I love this community."

The effort to generate belief in NT was not limited to Sandtown-Winchester. Rouse and Enterprise understood that they would have to create national enthusiasm about the initiative to raise additional funds, so they worked to garner positive press coverage. Their success in attracting interest outside the community reinforced the sense of ambition and excitement within Sandtown, but it also led to unrealistic expectations. As one observer noted, "NT drew tremendous national attention long before there was really anything to show. Our expectations were set so high, it was difficult to scale them back or stop the intense marketing of the vision, despite the reality."

Unfortunately, a failure to meet goals can undermine stakeholders' faith, especially in poor communities that have borne the disappointment of broken promises before. When Rouse and Mayor Schmoke failed to produce quick results, some residents assumed it was because they didn't care about the community. This experience suggests that it is essential to manage stakeholders' expectations so that they both believe that change is possible and see concrete evidence that it can occur.

Implications of Lesson 3: Generate Belief in and Ownership of the Change

- Use broad-based planning as a tool to activate and energize the community.
- Don't sacrifice long-term trust for short-term passion. Balance the benefit of generating immediate excitement against the deficit of creating cynicism if plans don't produce quick results.
- Discourage press coverage in the early stages of an initiative, but use the time to educate reporters about comprehensive community change.
- Engage local stakeholders in translating the vision into practical goals and strategies. Have community members inform decisions about resource allocation so their expectations are realistic.
- Develop specific strategies for broadening and deepening ownership in ways that nurture incipient trust and sustain the initial momentum.

Lesson 4: Establish a Clear Decision-Making Process Early

Decisions about who will control the transformation process, set criteria for action, hire staff, control money, and determine the schedule for change are messy, challenging, and unavoidable. These discussions take up valuable time and tend to raise hidden conflicts, just when partners are eager to find unity and move ahead. This is especially true for CCIs, which unite powerful institutions with traditionally powerless communities. As NT demonstrated, it is best to face these issues early and head-on. For Sandtown-Winchester, the lack of a legitimate and effective governance structure allowed mistrust and resentment to build in the community.

It is no surprise that the question of who would govern Sandtown's transformation was always an issue for NT. The initiative's early implementation was able to move forward without a clear decision-making strategy because residents trusted Rouse and Schmoke and had participated in the planning process. As the initiative took shape, CBP appeared to be a likely vehicle for community-based governance. But CBP was never structured or operated in a way that established this role. As a result, what was said and what was done were often in conflict. As one resident suggested, "Early on there was discussion and planning about how the CBP board should be selected, and the mayor agreed that we would have community elections for the board, and there were actually plans to hold elections. But then it didn't happen. It wasn't that they missed it—they didn't want it."

Although some stakeholders now assert that CBP's board represents the community, this remains a minority view. Most external and internal observers believed that the mayor and Enterprise called most of the shots, and they questioned CBP's legitimacy as the voice of the community. One community member complained that the process for decision making "is not as fluid a situation as an independent CBO (community-based organization) would provide. Its board members are handpicked. They don't speak for most residents."

Without a decision-making system that is widely accepted as legitimate, without clarity on issues of control, and without the ongoing participation of a seasoned CBO, mistrust and resentment have festered within the community, undermining the initiative's achievements in other areas.

The community wanted to settle it early on who was going to be in charge when all was said and done, and we tried to do this quasi-[governance entity], but just in hindsight, it sounded like we didn't trust the community to be in charge and they knew it.

—FORMER CITY OFFICIAL

Implications of Lesson 4: Establish a Clear Decision-Making Process Early

- Recognize the importance of trust and issues of control in communities that have been buffeted by outside forces.
- Devote adequate time early on to discussions about decision making and control. Establish clear criteria and conditions under which the community will gain control of key resources.

- Provide adequate support for the development of an independent and legitimate community governance mechanism. Use this process to make all partners clarify their fundamental requirements and put them on the table.
- Recognize that decision-making strategies could change as the initiative evolves. Consider designing a governance system that can be implemented in stages and can change to meet new needs over time.

Lesson 5: Specify the Rules of Engagement

Good will and enthusiasm often carry partners through the early days of a new CCI. But all partnerships eventually hit rough ground, and then all partners revert to their own priorities unless the group has specified clear roles, expectations, and rules for holding members accountable to common goals. As with the issue of who makes decisions, collaborators don't like to discuss thorny questions about the nature of their partnership when they are trying to build early good will and enthusiasm. But an initial effort to clarify the roles of engagement will help produce a robust, responsive, and sustainable partnership.

> ***Without some form of rules that are jointly agreed upon by all parties, there is no way that residents can have a viable seat at the table.***
>
> —SANDTOWN RESIDENT

One important step in this process is to balance the distribution of power among partners. Which collaborator is best suited to lead each required role, given his or her interests, strengths, and limitations? How will partners share authority for communication, decision making, and other operations? The answers to these questions inform the second step, which is to develop and institutionalize an agreed-upon working relationship.

Because NT did not develop rules for engagement, each partner experienced fundamental disappointment and frustration with the other collaborators. Sandtown residents felt the confusion most keenly, especially around the topic of community building. As pressure mounted to produce results that could be demonstrated to funders, the focus on fostering democratic citizenship fell by the wayside. As residents later commented, because "there were no benchmarks set by NT around community ownership of the process, there was also no way to effectively question what was happening."

For NT, the relationship between the city and Enterprise posed an especially complex challenge. Both partners were simultaneously grateful for and frustrated by the other's participation. As one Enterprise staff member said, "We ran interference for the city. . . . Our role was to keep the city people happy." That sentiment was repeated almost word for word by city staff. City and Enterprise partners tended to be very solicitous of each other, fearing any sort of rupture in the partnership. Yet without a clearly defined accountability structure, each found the other making decisions or taking actions that seemed to step on other members' toes.

This power imbalance gave undue influence to the institutional partners' biases. Moreover, the lack of clarity about the terms of the partnership encouraged people to focus on their own interests rather than on the initiative's core goals. As one participant acknowledged, "My job was to keep the lid on, and as a result I made damn sure I had control."

Implications of Lesson 5: Specify the Rules of Engagement

- Take time to understand the conditions under which partners operate. These include institutional imperatives, capacities, pressures, and limitations.
- Negotiate agreement among partners on key responsibilities. These include roles and expectations for each partner, methods for resolving conflicts, and processes for communicating within and outside of the partnership.
- Establish ways to embed institutional leaders' goals and expectations within their bureaucracies. Find ways to monitor performance within partner organizations that supports those goals.

- Establish a process for reviewing and modifying the partnership.

Lesson 6: Consider Partnership with the Public Sector

Public entities are vital players in almost every aspect of community revitalization, but partnership with them can be a mixed bag. It can carry disadvantages as well as enormous benefits, and CCI planners must weigh this trade-off carefully.

Two factors should influence decisions about partnering with the public sector. First, the public entity's resources and authority should complement the initiative's agenda. For instance, are the barriers faced by the CCI political, legislative, or regulatory? If so, which public partner can be most helpful? Is the mayoralty strong or weak? If weak, where is the power vested? Which resources and issues are under the city's control? Does the county or state have more authority over and resources to control in some domains than it has in others?

Second, the initiative must be able to manage the public partners in a productive way. For example, would a public-sector partnership provoke rivalries that could preclude work with other partners? What might the partnership cost the initiative in terms of flexibility and control? Are there ways to help the public partner embed community building into its own bureaucracy?

Public-sector involvement was a mixed blessing for NT. The city's participation was an asset, and observers can cite many examples of improved city services and physical development in Sandtown that resulted, ranging from garbage cleanup to public safety. Most suggest that these changes could not have happened without the mayor's leadership, nor would Sandtown have been as

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COMPACT SCHOOLS PROJECT:

Providing a Template for School Improvement

As the education component of NT, the Compact Schools project aims to improve the educational outcomes of children who attend the three public elementary schools in Sandtown-Winchester: William Pinderhughes, George G. Kelson, and Gilmor.

The schools, in partnership with The Enterprise Foundation and the city school system, have worked on an array of strategies to accomplish this goal. For example, the creation of health clinics and computer labs at two schools helped to create a caring, stimulating school environment. To extend and reinforce the gains students make during the school year, the Compact convenes a six-week summer academy, which in 1999 enrolled 300 students—almost one-quarter of the student population.

In 1995 the project began to address issues of curriculum reform and professional development. The most significant effort to date has been the introduction of direct instruction. Direct instruction is a method of teaching and learning that involves instruction, coaching, and practice until students master the material. The process teaches students how to learn and teachers how to develop students' mastery. Direct instruction was introduced to two of the three schools in February 1997 and the third in August 1998. After a false start with the initial contractor, a second contractor began working with teachers in January 1998. The plan is to train a cadre of teachers who can replace the contractor after five years.

Direct instruction's effect on the school climate has been visibly positive. Through monthly coaching and staff development sessions, teachers are becoming skilled at implementing the highly scripted curriculum, and students are realizing that they can become excellent readers.

Test scores for third- and fifth-graders at Pinderhughes and Kelson have improved year since 1996. For example, in 1996 almost 4 percent of Pinderhughes's third-graders and 10 percent of its fifth-graders scored satisfactorily or above. By the end of the 1998-1999 school year, those figures rose to nearly 16 percent and 18 percent, respectively. (The improvements at Gilmor were slower, because of staff turnover and a later start. In 2000, the state of Maryland decided to designate an independent organization to manage the school, although Enterprise has been encouraged to continue working with Gilmor.)

In recognition of direct instruction's achievements for the Compact Schools, and of the promise that the process holds for other schools, the Baltimore school superintendent created a special district for the 18 city elementary schools that use direct instruction. Each school in the district receives $50,000 toward staff development and materials. The schools also formed an alliance with the University of Maryland to help attract teachers. The superintendent for this district meets regularly with Enterprise staff and representatives from direct-instruction schools outside Sandtown to share lessons and address common issues. This relationship provides a vehicle for linking change in the Compact Schools with larger systems change.

successful in attracting federal dollars. Some observers also believe that the mayor risked his own political interests by investing so much time and energy in a single neighborhood.

Some NT implementers argue that the dynamics of public partnership prevented the initiative from developing the community capacities needed for long-term success. As one person noted, "There are certain pressures that come to bear in the political domain that have a very anti-community-building agenda. There are some things in city government that won't allow you to do it: funding streams, divergent requirements and timelines, and so forth. Government operates just like other organizations. There are rules and procedures in government and you have to fit in their process, and that may not align with the community's needs."

> ***When you take on government, you also take on some of the baggage.***
>
> —NT OBSERVER

Two other notable complexities emerged in NT's work with the public sector. First, the city bureaucracy was unaccustomed to taking the innovative approaches required by NT and therefore did not always translate the mayor's support into action—or, worse, it subverted his directives or handled them in ways that skewed his intentions. Although the mayor "got it," the city's longtime bureaucrats might have been more effective and productive if they had received more monitoring, training, and incentives to engage in the initiative.

Second, NT concentrated on partnership with the city and ignored a potentially useful alliance with the state. Early in NT's implementation, the state of Maryland was assuming greater political authority over health, education, jobs, and social services. The state's jurisdiction over these domains might have made it an important partner for NT. Moreover, while the city was losing its tax base, the state's tax base was growing and therefore had more financial support to offer. NT never tested the state's willingness to join the partnership with Sandtown, perhaps because of chilly relations between Baltimore's mayor and the governor.

In the end, most people reached the conclusion expressed by one participant: "It is not a question of whether it is good or bad to have the mayor [support an initiative]. The city represents a very powerful force. There simply need to be some checks and balances."

Implications of Lesson 6: Consider Partnership with the Public Sector

- Analyze the policy barriers within the target neighborhood and identify public entities that could help remove them. Devise a strategy for addressing the barriers in each sector.
- Examine the links between your agenda and that of the public sector. Identify ways changes at the neighborhood level could promote the priorities of relevant public entities, and prioritize those changes.
- Look for public officials who are willing to take risks.
- Promote voter registration and other forms of citizen engagement so that the community has an active voice in the larger civic arena.
- Retain adequate autonomy in the community. Don't invite the public sector to participate in the neighborhood's internal affairs.

IMPLEMENTATION: THE LATER LESSONS

A RELATED SET OF ISSUES comes into play as a comprehensive community initiative (CCI) moves from early start-up to full implementation. During this difficult phase, partners make promises to funders, put their own money on the table, recruit staff, rearrange roles and responsibilities, and turn ideas into action. Internal conflicts reemerge as established organizations and grassroots collaborators vie for prominence, priorities clash, and skeptics carp from the sidelines. The lessons of the Neighborhood Transformation (NT) Initiative continue here with an emphasis on the later aspects of implementation.

Lesson 7: Embed Community Building in Every Activity

Unless community building has a clear and vital role in all implementation activities, and that role is enforced, this important ingredient of neighborhood transformation will get lost amid other elements that compete for attention and investment. The trick lies in managing the pressure to show immediate results while still nurturing the capacity of residents to produce long-term changes and the capacity of partner organizations to improve their own knowledge, skills, and systems.

NT began with a strong commitment to developing the skill and expertise of residents, but this goal proved elusive. NT planning documents asserted that "all programs, strategies, and activities should nurture the assets and capacities of residents and existing organizations so they can fully participate in the transformation process." Early discussions generated ideas about how to achieve this goal—by having residents shadow organizational leaders and eventually assume their roles, for example, or by providing extensive training and mentoring.

As NT moved into implementation, however, some residents detected a shift from the bottom-up focus on community building, with its emphasis on residents' ideas and democratic participation, to a top-down focus on services and outcomes, which they viewed as more "technocratic," "results-oriented," "one-sided," and "controlled."

Sandtown's external partners, meanwhile, were caught between doing and enabling. They felt accountable to their investors and wanted to deliver results, but they also wanted to honor the community-building agenda. Some partners found it easier to "do for people" than to teach them how to produce their own results, observers

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noted. The external partners also had their own lessons to learn about the challenge and responsibility of creating, supporting, and sustaining neighborhood transformation.

Three factors contributed to NT's struggle with community building:

- Confusion about the benefits of community building compared with social services. Social and health services are important aspects of community revitalization, but they are different from community building. Hiring an outreach worker may improve the delivery of a particular service, for example, but it does not usually build leadership or a communal voice.

The tension between services and community building was further complicated by conflicting signals within Sandtown. As one source noted, "A lot of people on the board [of Community Building in Partnership] to this day believe the solution is to get more city services."

- The role of categorical funding. Most of the funding available for Sandtown's revitalization targeted service interventions rather than community building and resident mentoring. Some implementers now suggest that partners were ambivalent about the relative importance of investing in "hard" or "soft" improvements.

Hard results, such as physical improvements in housing, infrastructure, and facilities, can be counted and seen and thus are more appealing to investors. Both the city and Enterprise also had more experience producing that type of tangible change. Soft results include improvements in individual work and life skills, the emergence of community leaders, a greater sense of community effectiveness, and more hope for the future. In the 1990s, when NT began implementation, these outcomes —already less tangible than hard results—were not well-defined and measurable. That fact, combined with limited resources, pressure from funders, and the implementers' expertise primarily with hard results, meant that soft outcomes slipped off the agenda.

- The use of outside consultants to manage change. As the initiative moved from planning into implementation, NT employed consultants to provide technical assistance, raise funds, and fill organizational gaps. The rationale for this strategy was that a venture of such scale required a highly trained and experienced staff to generate capital and jump-start activities—and the residents who initially applied for NT staff jobs did not possess the right skills. What began as a stop-gap measure, however, quickly became the norm. Consultants continued to run the show as NT progressed, and some residents felt excluded. Community members also felt that the consultants lacked commitment to building neighborhood capacity.

As one observer commented, "The small 'd' in democracy got lost. However much we may have needed the experts to take the next step, we also needed to be doubly vigilant not to lose accountability to the community."

Implications of Lesson 7: Embed Community Building in Every Activity

- Engage residents in discussions about the abilities required for various roles. Remain open to creative management solutions.
- Foster community members' competencies. Crucial strategies include mentoring, shadowing, and teaching.
- Create incentives for partner institutions to develop and support community-building activities. Develop and implement a capacity-building plan for these partners that addresses knowledge, skills, and systems.
- Make sure that outside experts are accountable to the original community vision. In particular, reinforce their commitment to ongoing community engagement.
- Don't rely on outside experts for long-term implementation. Move consultants away from central management roles as skills develop within the community.
- Establish a way to monitor community-building activities. Make the change process transparent so it is clear when community building does and does not occur.

Lesson 8: Ground Expectations in an Explicit Strategy

All initiatives, especially those with major funding and comprehensive goals, need a strategy for turning expectations into concrete realities. The implementation strategy guides partners as they select and sequence activities, make financial allocations, govern operations, and specify achievable outcomes.

An implementation strategy goes beyond the initiative's plan for neighborhood revitalization, which typically does not propose viable pathways; assign responsibilities to specific partners; or weigh the benefits of each choice in terms of financial costs, funder interest, or human capacity. The development of an implementation strategy is an opportunity to test hopes against realities—a process through which partners educate each other about their limits and negotiate priorities within those bounds.

In NT, the existence of powerful champions (Rouse and Schmoke), a compelling and comprehensive vision, and an unusual public-private partnership obscured the need for a clear implementation strategy. Planners did understand that neighborhood transformation required changes in several areas simultaneously. But they seemed to assume that smart and experienced people, thrown into multiple domains at once, would simply figure out where the opportunities were and then make things happen.

A 1993 planning document reinforced this view, stating that "no dream, suggestion, or plan was left out of the 'Puzzle Book' because it was thought to be infeasible. Rather, the 'Puzzle Book' outlines what was thought to be right for Sandtown-Winchester." Although NT implementers treated the "Puzzle Book" as a strategy document, many now acknowledge that they really considered it more of a "shopping list" of possible approaches.

As a result, although NT developed goals in each area of intervention, it did not specify pathways for accomplishing goals, the connections among goals, or the responsibilities of each partner in promoting the goals. Important questions of priority and sequence went unanswered. Key objectives, such as community building, were not well integrated into activities. And with their lofty expectations but without strategic benchmarks for measuring progress, NT partners had no real way to know whether the approach was working. Although there was enormous activity, quality and focus were often lacking.

As NT moved forward without an implementation strategy, the availability of resources began to drive the initiative's focus. Accessible funds for social services gave that issue prominence, and less concrete issues (such as community building) fell by the wayside. One former staff member recalls, "It was clear opportunism. Where there were resources, we went. Anything in the 'Puzzle Book' was fair game." Another said, "Once you start going after the program dollars, then you have to do programs, and that usually means that you don't also train 20 residents to shadow other program staff."

Most of the sources interviewed for this study continue to believe in the interrelatedness of social problems and the need for solutions that build connections. Based on their experience with NT, however, they advocate a modest, well-defined, and explicitly integrated strategic approach.

There is this tension between whether transformation is really about programmatic interventions and what they deliver, or whether it is about transforming people's lives and helping them move from place A to place B—a tension between being concerned about the number of people who went through X program, or developing the people to have choices and [be] able to act on them.

—NT OBSERVER

Implications of Lesson 8: Ground Expectations in an Explicit Strategy

- Clarify key assumptions from all partners about how the initiative is intended to produce change. Agree on a common framework and process for strategy development that ranks and sequences activities and specifies outcomes.

- Make sure that strategic choices are well-informed. They should reflect both local knowledge and a disciplined analysis of broader trends, constraints, and opportunities.
- Build in benchmarks to assess progress. Use these measures to show how well strategies are working as the initiative unfolds.
- Assess each strategy's viability against the capacity and resources needed to implement it. Revise accordingly.

Most funders don't want to get their hands dirty. They don't want to take risks. They want to buy ... early, short-term success.

— NT CONSULTANT

Lesson 9: Balance Funding Against Pace and Priorities

Few community initiatives have enough money to support their goals, so fundraising is a constant challenge. But the CCI's vision, priorities, and schedule must drive decisions about whose money to seek, when to accept it, and how to use it. Funders are always attracted to a smart vision and to opportunities to dramatically leverage their investments. It's easy for their objectives to influence a grantee's decisions, which can seriously skew efforts to produce delicate, complex social changes. But a lack of resources can force an initiative to a grinding halt. Success lies in balancing outside funding sources with the initiative's own schedule and priorities.

Funding was a driving issue for NT—and sometimes a divisive one. With its ambitious agenda, the initiative's fundraising challenge seemed like an Olympian task. Rouse, however, reasoned that only a very large goal could mobilize sufficient energy and resources. As one observer commented, "The world works with big visions and sexy ideas. Small things don't get funded."

NT met the challenge remarkably well, raising more than $70 million from more than 65 public and private sources over 10 years. Slightly more than half of this total was earmarked for housing from such sources as the National Community Development Initiative and HUD. Several foundations made substantial investments in particular areas, such as education (Annenberg), health (Kellogg), program support (Kellogg), planning and administration (Fannie Mae), evaluation (Ford), and capacity building and systems reform (Annie E. Casey). The Casey Foundation paid for the creation of this report; other funders provided grants for specific projects.

NT was more successful at raising funds from public sources than from the private sector. Rouse had hoped to convince private-sector leaders that investment in Sandtown was in their own self-interest because, in the long run, it would reduce taxes and create long-term efficiencies in government. Although his argument might well have been correct, it did not motivate large investments from the private sector, apart from grants from several corporate foundations.

To raise money, NT had to negotiate within the constraints of the funding world, which traditionally invests in narrowly defined areas. NT's leaders had to patch together several categorical funding streams to support the comprehensive scope of work. Like other CCIs, NT had the hardest time raising funds for the "soft" side of the transformation process—the community-building and organizing activities that "glue" an initiative together.

When money did come to NT, there was little infrastructure in place to manage it. The Enterprise Foundation ultimately took responsibility for fiscal management, which imparted a degree of programmatic responsibility that did not always rest well with other partners. According to one former consultant, "Money came so fast and so large that people got concerned with making sure that nothing bad happened, and in trying to deliver some immediate return, and that began to erode this marriage."

The community was not fully aware of the challenge of raising money. Although residents saw many potential funders touring the neighborhood, they did not always realize what a struggle it was to keep funds flowing or understand the difficult trade-offs that partners faced. Some residents also complained that community entities were not directly in charge of the money.

Implications of Lesson 9: Balance Funding Against Pace and Priorities

- Engage in a continual process of educating funders. Make sure they understand the process of neighborhood transformation and the need for long-term, flexible funding.
- Construct project budgets to build in funding for capacity building. Make the case that sustainability depends on investing in human and organizational capital.

It's great to have [funders'] money, but you also have to decide whether it is worth it.

— SANDTOWN CBO MEMBER

- Avoid setting up false expectations. Don't accept funding that exceeds the initiative's capacity to spend it effectively.
- Share decisions about fundraising with a broad group of stakeholders.

Lesson 10: Nurture Connections Among People, Ideas, and Institutions

Complex problems require comprehensive solutions—strategies that reach across a community's physical, economic, and social sectors to link individuals, families, and organizations. It isn't easy to forge these connections, however, especially when the purpose is to build community strengths and reform systems.

Solid connections come from three sources:

- A vehicle or mechanism that coordinates interactions among people, institutions, ideas, and information. This mechanism should stimulate communication across and within stakeholder groups. In particular, it should encourage ongoing, substantive dialogue on how each player's work fits into the larger initiative. And it should help identify and broker links between people and institutions working toward the same goals.
- Shared responsibility among stakeholders for making and maintaining connections. With shared responsibility, comprehensive thinking becomes the norm for all partners.
- Effective communication with the community. Sharing information with residents, partners, and potential allies helps them recognize opportunities for collaboration.

Implications of Lesson 10: Nurture Connections Among People, Ideas, and Institutions

- Invest sufficient time and resources to develop an entity or process that can maintain focus on the big picture. This vehicle should be exclusively devoted to its role as a connection-building intermediary.
- Invest the entity or process with qualities that inspire connections. These include a spirit of service, a willingness to listen, an orientation toward adding value, and a culture in which information—particularly about policy and financial choices—is broadly shared.
- Establish vehicles for communication. These should articulate the initiative's goals and strategies and enable all participants to see how their work fits into the larger initiative.
- Recognize the natural tendency to drift away from strategic approaches, and build in safeguards. These might include an outside coach, a small but diverse work group that meets regularly, or an external advisory group.
- Develop strategies to integrate project activities at multiple levels—institutional, managerial, professional, and within the community.

Several factors limited NT's efforts to develop the essential elements. First, although the transformation plan established CBP to "ensure the effective implementation, coordination, and monitoring of the housing, physical and economic development, education, health and human services, and community building activities," CBP struggled to fulfill its role. The director's position turned over six times within the first decade, and all directors came from outside the community. CBP's growing focus on providing services also conflicted with the entrepreneurial and strategic role of making connections.

Instead of becoming an entity whose primary job was to bring everyone together, CBP focused increasingly on its own operations and programs.

To some extent, the foundation's Neighborhood Transformation Center (NTC) filled the gap by convening stakeholders and helping them approach outside funders. The Safe and Sound Campaign, launched in 1999, also helped foster connections by engaging 700 residents in a community inventory that identified local gifts, strengths, and abilities. In addition, Safe and Sound, coordinated by Healthy Start, has recently emerged as a vehicle for strategic conversation and linkage.

Despite these improvements, the lack of a means for coordinating and communicating the big picture left NT's components disconnected and categorical. The housing, education, economic development, and health programs largely functioned autonomously, and their strategies did not often filter back to inform or define the initiative's overall approach.

Second, NT did not communicate well with the community, so people who were active and interested often did not know what was happening—and, even worse, misconceptions and rumors took root. Although the *Viewpoint* newspaper helped to build a sense of community identity, stakeholders did not perceive it as a consistent vehicle for information about substantive policy issues.

Lesson 11: Build Residents' Economic Self-Sufficiency

Theories about economic self-sufficiency have evolved since NT began. During that time, welfare reform has created pressure for the chronically poor to find employment. Knowledge has improved about ways to promote job readiness and access, encourage economic development, and integrate economic interventions with other supports. Program developers are recognized that jobs are moving from the inner city to the fringes of suburbia, which limits the effectiveness of interventions located solely in poor neighborhoods. And people have begun to analyze economic development in ways that recognize the hard-nosed realities of job growth and worker supply.

Those changes, combined with NT's experiences, suggest an important lesson for CCIs: Residents' economic self-sufficiency must be a high priority from the beginning, and it must follow a strategy that is grounded in the larger regional economy. The strategy must include a means of monitoring progress toward economic development.

NT had no overarching strategy for economic development, although the "Puzzle Book" covered the topics of business development, retail goods and services, market renovation, small-business assistance, and employment and training. As NT moved into implementation, these components failed to develop fully. Some residents suggested that the NT concept never really included an economic perspective; as one said, "Enterprise and the city thought that if they placed an emphasis on services, health, and housing that people would feel good enough about themselves to go out into the job market and do for themselves." Other observers blamed NT's funding sources, which at that time favored service-based programs: "The early funding was categorical and didn't match up with what the community wanted. What the community wanted was jobs."

The lack of a strategy based on a solid analysis of economic conditions, opportunities, and trends made it hard for NT to develop solutions that placed the community in a larger context. Early community discussions reflected unrealistic assumptions about consumer preferences, supply and distribution systems, capital availability, or other market realities, and they treated Sandtown-Winchester's economy as an isolated phenomenon. This was an important omission, because while the city of Baltimore has steadily lost jobs for more than two decades, there has been considerable job growth in the outer suburbs. One participant concluded, "It is a delicate process to empower the community to be self-sufficient and yet to also be part of the whole regional economy."

In addition, the Sandtown initiative faced several practical barriers to economic development. A large percentage of residents had problems with alcohol and drug abuse, police records, or negative perceptions about work that were based on their personal experiences. The neighborhood also lacked a strong business infrastructure; the largest employers were public agencies, and there were few commercial ventures of any size. There were few community leaders able to move an economic agenda forward.

NT's partners also faced tough trade-offs around economic decisions. For instance, to keep the Nehemiah Homes affordable, Enterprise allowed some parts of construction

to be done in factories outside the community. This meant that there were fewer potential jobs on site. Affordability and job creation were both valid goals, but some residents would have preferred the jobs to the lower housing cost.

As NT progressed, the goals of income generation and economic development gained higher priority. The Avenue Market, an indoor marketplace for commercial stores and vendors, was renovated and reopened in 1996. Sandtown Works, a skills training and job placement program, was created the same year and eventually merged with EDEN Jobs at New Song Urban Ministries. Jobs-Plus, a national employment-training and placement program, was recruited to Gilmor Homes in 1997. The Baltimore Empowerment Zone, part of a federal initiative, has one of its Village Centers on the edge of Sandtown and received support from Enterprise to launch a career-training center for Empowerment Zone residents.

Implications of Lesson 11: Build Residents' Economic Self-Sufficiency

- Learn about neighborhood markets and possible entry points for economic revitalization. Assess the neighborhood's competitive advantages by site, employment base, and infrastructure.
- Analyze metropolitan market trends and opportunities. Develop connections to growing markets.
- Explore connections to existing business and economic development support structures.
- Exploit connections between employment and all other initiative activities.
- Establish an independent monitoring and advisory mechanism for economic development activities.

Lesson 12: Use Neighborhood-Focused Intermediaries to Change Systems

Skilled intermediaries can improve service systems if they follow an explicit strategy grounded in residents' experience, exploit opportunities presented by the comprehensive approach, have reform-minded partners, and attract effective leaders.

The organization must have dedicated and skilled staff who have specialized knowledge and can advocate for improvements. It must have a clear and focused strategy for connecting neighborhood-level change with improvements in broader policies and practices. It must be able to harness resources to implement the changes. And it must link with leaders in the public and private sectors who have authority to implement new strategies—people who are willing both to push and to be pushed.

NT has used issue-focused intermediaries to stimulate improvements in delivery systems for housing, education, and health. A good example is the Vision for Health (VFH) consortium, a partnership among residents, private and public service providers, and the city that has reformed health, education, and employment systems. Building on its relationships with health and education providers, VFH established health clinics in each of Sandtown's three schools, a change that streamlined systems for providing medical and mental health services. Thus, when a school-based therapist had trouble obtaining parental consent for a child's counseling, VFH outreach workers could help get the forms completed. Health clinic staff could meet regularly with the principals to discuss students' progress and share ideas. VFH also hired and trained community members to work as outreach staff, which improved residents' marketability.

VFH designed its systems around the needs expressed by residents, and residents continue to influence decisions through monthly health promotion meetings and discussions with a resident advisor. The participating health institutions became more responsive to residents by providing new programs at new hours and by offering services in a more coordinated fashion. Leaders from the city's health department explored ideas for changing budget policies to reduce barriers to health care in Sandtown. For instance, VFH has tried to connect local service programs to larger issues within the service systems, such as a proposal to change health care financing at the state level to include coverage for all low-income residents.

VFH succeeded for several reasons. The "compact" between residents and health care providers that VFH established gave community members status and a set of core operating principles, which they can use to demand accountability. Unusually resourceful leaders among the residents, service systems, program coordinators, and

city worked to move the reforms forward. And the increasingly competitive health care industry began to recognize residents' value and power as customers. But it was VFH's role as an intermediary that fueled and coordinated the changes.

Implications of Lesson 12: Use Neighborhood-Focused Intermediaries to Change Systems

- Look for entrepreneurial leaders who appreciate the long-term and complex nature of system change. Provide resources to support them at all levels of the initiative.
- Keep system change efforts grounded in residents' experience. Otherwise, you risk losing an important constituency for change.
- Establish operating rules to support productive partnerships among the diverse groups that need to be involved in system changes: residents, providers, and public officials.
- Establish partnerships with explicit responsibilities and capacities for mining opportunities across different domains. These domains include public policy and the private market at the neighborhood, city, regional, state, and federal levels.

Lesson 13: Create a Culture of Learning and Self-Assessment

Continuous learning gives CCI partners a chance to reflect on community conditions, assess their progress, and refine strategies. Information about how an initiative

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VISION FOR HEALTH CONSORTIUM:

A Vehicle for Changing Systems and Improving Access to Services

As in many tough communities, the health care available to Sandtown-Winchester residents was fragmented and often inaccessible. The NT plans called for a comprehensive, integrated health care system—one in which service providers would collaborate and adjust their practices in unprecedented ways, city and state policies would improve service quality and availability, and residents would actively understand and shape their own health care.

VFH was established in 1993 as the vehicle for this ambitious agenda. Its members were four medical centers located near Sandtown and the University of Maryland School of Nursing, the Baltimore City Health Department, and CBP. The Enterprise Foundation served as fiscal agent.

At its inception, VFH faced three major challenges: how to unify competing providers to share resources and responsibility for the community's health, how to engage the community and sustain residents' attention to health needs and priorities, and how to link local strategies to city and state health care reforms.

Provider Collaboration. Service providers rarely come together to consider all the health care needs of a community's residents. But VFH leveraged each institution's natural interest in patient recruitment, risk reduction, staff development, and social responsibility into a commitment to the greater community. In 1994, with encouragement from Baltimore's health department, VFH members agreed to share some resources along with financial and programmatic responsibilities.

VFH stimulated changes among its members that resulted in more and better services for residents. But it also developed broad partnerships that leveraged new services and increased access for previously underserved populations. The most substantial partnership has been the Children's Health Network, which in 1995 established clinics in three Sandtown elementary schools. These clinics link the schools with the university's nursing school and medical system, University Care; the city's health department; Bon Secours Baltimore Health System; and Enterprise. In addition to primary care, the clinics now provide mental health services (supported by Baltimore Mental Health Systems), urgent dental care (from the university's dental school), and a dental sealant program (supported by the health department).

The school-based clinics brought services to many children. During the 1998-1999 school year, 74 percent of enrolled students visited the clinics (almost 1,000 of more than 1,300 children), resulting in 10,747 health visits. Another 120 students were linked to mental health services, 900 students were screened for dental services, and 235 received immediate or preventive dental care. The network's annual immunization drive reaches 100 percent of the enrolled students; consequently, none start school late or are expelled for lack of immunization. Before the clinics began operating, 38 percent of students delayed starting school because of incomplete immunization records.

Community Engagement. Residents played a major role in VFH by shaping, managing, and implementing the consortium's agenda. First, VFH hired a resident advisor to attend all VFH meetings and represent the

is changing also can be a significant tool for recruiting new leaders and partners, building community investment, making difficult but necessary choices, and expanding the capacity of all collaborators.

Learning is especially important for CCIs because there is little established wisdom to draw from when it comes to planning, pacing, and measuring community change. Thus the culture of learning should be embedded within the initiative, and it should be a dynamic process—one in which good questions are as important as good answers. CCI partners won't resolve all tensions or make ideal choices every time. But if they regularly think about issues, trade-offs, and creative solutions, they will challenge and reject unsuccessful practices and find new opportunities for improvement.

Learning is most likely to produce tangible results when it grows out of mechanisms for project management, measurement, and accountability. These are natural opportunities for partners to discuss experiences, share candid opinions about strategies, and derive collective lessons about what is or is not working.

NT began with a decidedly experimental attitude. As the 1993 planning document noted, "What is proposed here is not a conclusion, but a beginning. These proposals are building blocks for action over the next three years and beyond. The proposal should be challenged and changed continuously as what works and what doesn't is learned."

Despite this promising start, NT's ability to reflect on and learn from its own mistakes, and to retool in response, was mixed. Without a formal method of learning

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community's interests as the collaborating institutions made decisions about programs and resources. Second, VFH hired and trained residents to be health outreach workers in the community. The outreach workers were an effective tool for delivering services; they learned first-hand about residents' needs and could use the information to help shape responses. Third, VFH held monthly "Vision Connection" forums to educate residents about health-related topics and to solicit feedback on health concerns.

Links with City and State Policy Reform. From the beginning, the Baltimore City Health Department viewed Sandtown as a laboratory for developing and testing health care practices and reforms that might be replicated in low-income communities around the state. For example, VFH could help determine realistic levels of outreach by community staff, estimate the size of the uninsured population, or identify residents who were eligible for insurance. In particular, VFH's focus on improving access and coordination of health care could inform a broader policy for financing such systems.

The relationships developed through VFH's partnerships are changing health care systems:

- VFH became the initial funder of the Maryland Citizens Health Initiative Education Fund, a nonprofit corporation working to educate the public about the need for universal health care in Maryland.
- The partnership between VFH and the health department expanded pediatric dental services at the Druid Center, a clinic located adjacent to Sandtown-Winchester, to include uninsured adults referred by VFH. The health department also expanded its dental sealant program to all elementary schools in Baltimore and, in collaboration with the university's nursing school, arranged to assess the community's dental needs.
- VFH and Baltimore Health Care Access, a quasi-public organization that serves as an enrollment broker for the Children's Health Insurance Program and the Maryland Health Choice Program, agreed to locate two part-time community health care advocates within VFH.
- In collaboration with the city's health department, local colleges, the Community Health Workers Association, and local legislators, VFH is creating a curriculum and certification requirements for community health workers.
- Through the Jobs-Plus Initiative, a national employment demonstration program, VFH and the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development established the Health Promotion Center in the Gilmor Homes public-housing project.
- With support and collaboration from VFH and other partners, the health department planned the Men's Public Health Center just one block from Sandtown-Winchester. The center will increase health care access for uninsured and underserved males between the ages of 19 and 64 who reside in Baltimore.

and self-assessment, NT had no systematic process to inform decision making, revisit assumptions, incorporate new information, or reexamine its approach.

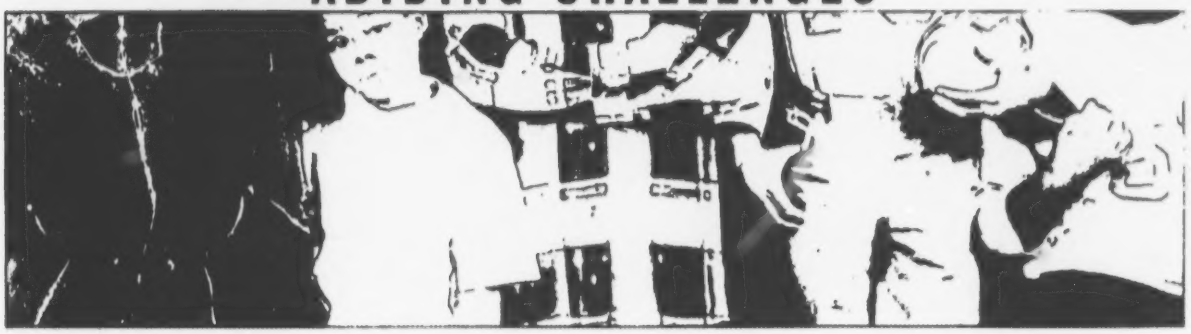
The problem stemmed partly from the lack of built-in learning vehicles, such as a long-term independent evaluation. Various reports by Enterprise staff and independent consultants have been useful, but they appear sporadic and problem driven, and the issues they raise have not been widely debated or shared. A national advisory group met several times, but it was not fully used as a forum for discussing serious challenges. NT's need to raise funds and market the transformation concept also made it hard to discuss issues candidly.

Implications of Lesson 13: Create a Culture of Learning and Self-Assessment

- Develop several vehicles for feedback and learning, and make them key tools for building capacity and democratic participation. Make sure that all partners share in the process of learning.
- Develop explicit learning goals for the initiative.
- Build in an independent capacity to assess progress and provide feedback.
- Establish an inviting culture. Don't punish failure; reward learning, critique, and revision.
- Vest learning functions in all aspects of the initiative. Establish an entity or venue for systematically reviewing and debating the big picture.

As NT progressed, some program components developed ways to evaluate progress and share learning—most notably, about the work in the schools and the effort to create a linked management information system. NTC also developed a significant capacity for analysis, an orientation toward ongoing learning, and an ability to use its knowledge to assist residents and programs. For instance, center staff are producing an annual "report card" to assess community conditions. The center also has commissioned a periodic resident survey to measure the perceived quality of life in Sandtown. These tools are a significant improvement in NT's culture of learning.

ABIDING CHALLENGES



SEVERAL INTERRELATED ISSUES lie just below the surface of comprehensive initiatives, and they tend to arise in many forms throughout an initiative's life. These issues center on the complicated nature of interactions between powerful mainstream institutions and poor people in poor communities. They emerge from the differences in people's lives and perspectives, from the inequality of power between institutions, and from the common struggle to establish an effective working partnership. In the end, these issues also are about respect and trust.

Struggles around inequality and difference are not unique to a particular initiative; they have a long history in neighborhoods and the nation. Nonetheless, these issues are critical for comprehensive community initiatives (CCIs) that focus on community building, as Neighborhood Transformation (NT) Initiative does.

This section attempts to shed light on the tensions that inevitably arise in partnerships like NT. The voice heard here is often the perspective of Sandtown residents, because these are issues about which residents spoke much more often than did the other partners. The abiding challenges presented here involve altering the balance of power, acknowledging issues of race and class, respecting diverse stakeholders, honoring residents' capacity to lead, and harnessing the community's spiritual strength.

In contrast to the two previous chapters, we have not attempted to draw practical implications from the proposed lessons. These challenges do not lend themselves to easy counsel or simple remedy. The task for all partners is to figure out how to acknowledge the issues, negotiate the differences, and internalize the lessons that prove important.

Challenge 1: Altering the Balance of Power

At the heart of lasting social change lies a shift in power—one that enables residents to mobilize resources, influence rules, and control the institutions and systems that affect their lives. Or, as one resident put it, "There need to be other entities to speak to the forces to help [the external partners] recognize the limitation of their own powers."

Yet nothing is more difficult for outside entities to support than this change in power relationships. The neighborhood's interests may conflict with those of external partners. And even the most influential partners

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cannot permanently change the behavior of bureaucracies, service agencies, city councils, bankers, or mayors unless the structures that determine outcomes also change. Within NT, the efforts of Mayor Schmoke and The Enterprise Foundation demonstrated that external incentives can generate new energy and ideas and, for a short time, make public systems more responsive. But as one city official noted, it's very hard to sustain this change when many other neighborhoods are clamoring for the same special attention.

You can't make serious change without a political and an economic agenda.

—SANDTOWN RESIDENT

Despite wide agreement that power is important, few collaborators are prepared to address it head-on. According to NT participants, Sandtown's external partners planned to promote resident-driven and community-governed activities, but as they shifted into implementation mode "there [was] no recognition of power growing out of the community." An observer who described the city and Enterprise as two powerful "gorillas" noted that "no one gives up power. If people had kept up the organizing effort, CBP [Community Building in Partnership, Inc.] could have been its own gorilla. But [the city and Enterprise] were not going to take the risk of letting CBP have enough power so that CBP could tell them to go to hell."

Most NT collaborators agree that the pathways to power sharing are complicated. Several observers noted that Sandtown was politically fragmented, with local rivalries that resulted in infighting, inaction, and ineffectiveness. Shared power in this setting would require the community to get its own shop in order, some sources said. Community stakeholders, for their part, generally did not question the external organizations' good intentions, and they appreciated the risk they took that neighborhood interests might "hijack" CBP or other intermediaries. Still, residents commented on the differences in perspective between influential people and those who lack power. "People with power and resources and information have a different philosophy, a different way of seeing life," one woman observed. "It's not wrong, it's just different."

Challenge 2: Acknowledging Issues of Race and Class

An undercurrent of tensions around race and class often runs through exchanges between poor communities of color and mainstream institutions. It is essential to acknowledge these tensions, if not to resolve them, to build trust among collaborators.

The subtext of race and class permeated many of our interviews about NT, particularly around the topic of power. For instance, there were class tensions between Winchester's relatively middle-class African-American residents and the less economically secure African-American residents of Sandtown. Each city sector resented the others' presumed confidence in representing both neighborhoods. Similarly, racial tensions seemed to lie just below the surface in exchanges between black residents and white outsiders, but they were not often discussed with outsiders.

As one woman noted, "It's hard to talk about race in Baltimore. Baltimore has such a pervasive, small-southern-town mentality that white is right, that it's sometimes hard to see it." Still, community members realized that Baltimore has some very racially segregated neighborhoods and that the racial mix of these neighborhoods remained largely unchanged despite improvements in schools, public safety, and housing.

Respondents typically discussed issues of race and class in terms of "subtle" signals in interactions or choices made—rarely in their more crude or obvious forms. People gave many examples of racial or class disparities, such as the dynamics of an NT meeting on program management and development. According to one participant, "It was only when Enterprise and the city were out of the room that residents began to voice different views," such as the need for CBP to get out of the role of delivering services.

The pervasive racial and class issues described by some residents cause them to experience the world as a hostile environment. This is especially true for Sandtown's young black men. One man said he counseled youth that "You have to learn to function in society or they will

There is an incredible subtlety to the way power and perceptions of power color people's behaviors and reactions.

—SANDTOWN COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

'house' [imprison] you. They will 'house' you before they will send you to school." Reported another, "I tell the young people, 'They are finished with us [men of his generation]. . . . They're building those prisons for y'all.'"

NT participants also viewed issues of race and class in structural terms. Although Enterprise was represented in Sandtown by a skilled, primarily African-American staff, for example, the foundation's actions were still viewed as those of a structurally white institution. As one local program manager explained: "The people with money are white. The people with money always want control. There is a built-in assumption that they know what is right for you. It's a racist assumption, but pervasive nonetheless. Of course race is a factor, but it is subtle. It's so subtle, in fact, that it's built into our assumptions, so that it's hard to see. . . . They have the money, they set the standards, and they design the project."

All NT partners commented privately that racial issues were a major barrier to establishing trust among collaborators. Most also recognized that partners had varying levels of comfort discussing these issues. All knew that the issues reflected larger tensions in American society and were beyond the capacity of NT to resolve, but the question of how to treat racial issues within NT remained. No one offered a sure or easy solution, but several respondents suggested that merely putting the issue on the table—and even discussing the level of discomfort—would have opened up communication and increased trust.

Challenge 3: Showing Respect

Over and over again, residents used the term "respect" to capture the qualities they expect in the outsiders who help them transform Sandtown. These qualities include an ability to listen and learn, a willingness to acknowledge one's own limitations, a capacity to appreciate another person's experiences, and a commitment to honest engagement.

Respect, as described by residents, had many permutations. It took on racial implications when a person of color perceived disrespectful treatment from a white person. And it assumed broader importance if outsiders seemed not to understand or appreciate the conditions of people living in poor neighborhoods, regardless of their color. For instance, some residents defined respect as the humility with which an outsider approaches his or her work in a poor community—whether the outsider appears to "hold himself above you." Another described respect as "what you feel"; an ability to "have the same heart" as community members.

Residents who commented on respect were profoundly aware of signs of disrespect. They did not flatly condemn outsiders, however; in fact, they greatly valued those outsiders who showed respect for the community. One person referred to the consultants with whom she worked as "a godsend." The key distinction between outsiders who were valued and those who were not centered on the outsider's perceived attitude. Respectful outsiders were described as being driven by a real passion for the community rather than for their individual careers, as treating residents with consideration and esteem, and as somehow sharing in their mission. As one resident said, these partners "are part of our family."

We recognize our powerlessness in the eyes of the world. But we also recognize our strength. . . . In the end, the real agenda is not how much stuff gets bought. It's how much dignity we will be treated with.

—SANDTOWN RESIDENT

Challenge 4: Honoring Residents' Competence as Leaders

External partners sometimes struggle to accept community members' competence and leadership capacity, but

this fundamental form of respect goes to the heart of neighborhood transformation. Do people within the community have the necessary skills to make good decisions and lead change? Or do experts really know better? Exactly what do we mean by competence, anyway? These questions are at once pertinent and incendiary.

Experienced practitioners suggest that CCIs require many kinds of competence. Some skills have led to success in the mainstream economic and social worlds. Equally important are the skills that have enabled residents of poor communities to survive in hostile and dispiriting circumstances. These competencies are not mutually exclusive, and residents often possess both. But although both types of skills are important, it isn't easy to find an appropriate balance between them. Several obstacles get in the way.

First, residents often feel that outsiders discount their competencies, especially their leadership skills. "Leadership happens by being connected to the residents," one resident explained. "You get a bond with the resident, you are out in the community, you talk with the people and you take questions, and they see your commitment and then they put you there [in a position of leadership]. They look up to you. But when you get to the table with these outside folks, you are nobody."

Some residents also say that outside partners underestimate their ability to learn, treating them as though they have no potential. This problem was acknowledged by one consultant, who also said that outsiders often fail to understand that some skills and competencies can be found only within the community or that the outside partner's skills can be useful only when combined with those found in residents.

Second, external partners in CCIs play a conflicting role: They simultaneously assist residents and prepare them to take over their own leadership. Each goal takes priority at different stages of the initiative, and the focus on residents' competencies varies accordingly.

Third, outsiders and community members alike sometimes fail to distinguish between the roles of residents as public leaders and as employees of the initiative's projects. It is possible for residents to act alternately as leaders and employees in different situations, using different skills in each instance. For example, when a resident questioned an outside partner's decision to clear out a block of housing without consulting the neighbors, the resident was taking a valid public leadership role. On the other hand, when a resident who worked for a community intermediary said to his manager, "I don't have to show up on time because I am from the community," he was speaking privately, as an employee, and his stand did not necessarily reflect on his abilities as a community leader.

In an initiative with community building at its core, the role of external partners is to share knowledge so that good decisions can be made—but not to make the decisions. True community building recognizes that the neighborhood has capacity to shape its own fate and that certain residents can lead the way. The line between "doing" for residents and enabling them is sometimes blurred. But understanding that there is a distinction, and wrestling openly with it, is an important step toward honoring community competence.

What poor people experience every day in the world is people who won't respect their intelligence and who won't follow their lead. . . . The tragic cycle can be broken only if one recognizes the intelligence and capacity to lead of uneducated and sometimes damaged people.

— NT OBSERVER

Challenge 5: Harnessing the Community's Spiritual Strength

Faith is a vital asset in some poor communities—one that can support individuals as well as religious institutions and leaders. But although a community's spiritual strength is a powerful engine for transformation, it is not always easy to recognize and harness.

Sandtown residents frequently described ways that their faith helped them overcome enormous obstacles, and it is clearly a touchstone to which they return. The experience of faith they described was not abstract, cautious, or

apologetic. As one woman explained, when God came into her life during a particularly difficult period, "It was the difference between night and day ... and for me it was the difference between death and life."

For NT's external partners, too, community transformation was sometimes a personal voyage of faith—a "quiet and determined struggle ... in the hearts of men and women" that lay beneath the public actions, policy development, and new construction. "We all must take personal and painful risks at many different levels. This is not what we usually talk about in public policy, but it's no less true," one participant observed.

It is not always obvious how the many manifestations of spirit and faith might influence a CCI. But the awareness that neighborhood transformation operates at many levels, including the spiritual—and that religious faith can be a huge resource for change—is important.

> ***There is a spiritual mission to a project like NT. Unless you understand that part of systems reform is healing the souls of broken men and women, you will fail. You cannot quantify that. You cannot assess it. But it is real.***
>
> —SANDTOWN RESIDENT

NEW SONG COMMUNITY CHURCH:

Building Neighborhood Infrastructure

The New Song Community Church is a strong neighborhood institution with a "bottom-up" philosophy. Its efforts to transform Sandtown start small, aiming for success over decades rather than years. New Song promotes community ownership and capacity, and it does not begin any venture until supporters are passionate about the idea and committed to investing their time and energy.

New Song evolved independently of NT, but each contributed to neighborhood transformation and to the other's development as a community institution. During NT's early years, New Song staff helped to define the vision and plans for action. Beginning in 1992, The Enterprise Foundation provided no-interest construction financing and technical support in arranging interest-free, permanent financing for Sandtown Habitat for Humanity, New Song's core project. New Song and NT also collaborated to merge Sandtown Works with EDEN Jobs, a move that will benefit both organizations. In addition, Enterprise provided grant and loan funds to help New Song rehabilitate its day care center.

The founders of New Song moved to Sandtown in 1986. Allan Tibbels, his wife Susan, and Mark Gornik—all of whom are white—were part of the Christian community development movement, committed to social ministry and racial reconciliation. They first built relationships with their neighbors, renovating their own homes in the neighborhood and transforming an abandoned convent into a church.

In 1989, the New Song founders established Sandtown Habitat for Humanity and began work on Habitat's first house. Ten years later, Habitat had completed 150 homes—with 50 more under construction. The average cost of a Habitat house is about $40,000, a cost kept low through volunteer labor, donated materials, and sweat equity by the new owners. Habitat families receive 20-year, no-interest mortgages; payments go into a revolving fund that finances other homes in the community.

New Song developed four community enterprises in addition to Sandtown Habitat:

- New Song Community Learning Center is a preschool and after-school program that serves 61 children; the New Song Academy, a school that recently gained public accreditation under the New Schools Initiative, enrolls 89 children and plans to extend from kindergarten through middle school.
- New Song Family Health Services, in partnership with Mercy Medical Center, provides primary health care for several thousand children and adults annually in a 3,000-square-foot facility.
- EDEN Jobs, a job readiness and placement agency, has found jobs for 475 unemployed Sandtown residents and expects to make 100 more placements annually.
- New Song Arts and Media, an organization devoted to developing and sharing community talent, manages a children's choir, administers music recording and distribution ventures, and holds community concerts and other musical celebrations.

All of these activities grew organically from a strong base—from one Habitat house, one volunteer doctor, and a handful of children in a learning center—to a collection of enterprises that employ about 75 full-time staff. Most are Sandtown residents, including LaVerne Stokes, co-executive director of Sandtown Habitat; and Amelia Harris, director of Family Health Services. Thousands of volunteers also participate in New Song's faith-based work.

MOVING FORWARD

THE NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSFORMATION (NT) INITIATIVE has been a surprise—significantly challenging and inspiring, sometimes daunting and frustrating, and ultimately worthwhile. After more than a decade of hard work, the time has come to assess its results. But what criteria do we use to measure the significance of a venture as broad and ambitious as NT? What are the indicators of progress? What are the standards of success? In part, the answer depends on the questions we ask:

- Are some nonprofit organizations stronger, better able to get things done, and more connected to resources and people outside the neighborhood?
- Are more residents part of some organized network, group, or organization?
- Has NT promoted changes in some service systems?
- Have new linkages been established between diverse programmatic efforts?
- Have some programs yielded improved outcomes?
- Has NT been able to attract substantial new resources?
- Has NT made tangible differences in the lives of residents?

Many of the people we interviewed answered these questions with a resounding "Yes!" They described many accomplishments, including construction or renovation of more than 1,000 housing units; improvements in city sanitation and public safety services; the addition of school-based medical and mental health services; other health care reforms; placement of computer labs in Sandtown schools; job training and placement for hundreds of residents; creation of a large indoor market; development of a community newspaper that disseminates information and reinforces community connections; food programs and other supports that met residents' basic survival needs; links with major federal programs such as Healthy Start and the Empowerment Zone initiative; and the investment of more than $70 million in new funds for community improvements. Through these changes, NT has improved the lives of thousands of Sandtown residents in small but significant ways.

Still, a second and more difficult set of questions bears consideration:

- Have NT's outcomes matched its goals?
- Have the results justified the level of investment?
- Has the vision been implemented accurately?
- Has the power of the neighborhood to control its destiny increased?
- Have systems been changed fundamentally?
- Has "transformation" been achieved?

Nobody is ever really ready for transformation. It is always going to catch you by surprise.

— SANDTOWN RESIDENT

The answers to the second set of questions are much more tentative, particularly within the limitations of this analytic review. However, it is noteworthy that—despite NT's substantial accomplishments—many stakeholders expressed frustration with the initiative's progress. This frustration, juxtaposed with the initiative's strong foundations and early accomplishments, suggest the importance of learning from NT's experiences.

Many of the lessons derived from NT pertain more to implementation than to the underlying concept. For example, NT's vision for change remained compelling, but it lacked a consistently clear and defined strategy. The partnership approach was beneficial, but it needed a stronger focus on fostering residents' power and capacity. The aim of connecting activities in a comprehensive way was useful, but it required a more effective and consistent means to do so. The early focus on school reform was ground-breaking, but the focus on jobs and economic development was less pronounced. And the goal of engaging community members in Sandtown's transformation remains a good strategy for building relationships, trust, and shared experiences, but it required more sustained effort and attention than expected.

The lessons produced by the Sandtown-Winchester experience and by NT's hard-won maturity are not

JIM ROUSE:

Heart and Soul of Neighborhood Transformation

Most of the people who participated in the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative viewed Jim Rouse as not just a connection to funding and other resources but as the very heart of the project and the keeper of its ambitious goals. Many had met Rouse and were inspired by his respect for people, his good intentions, and his ability to listen and learn. They praised his belief in communities, sometimes citing a 1969 speech in which Rouse said that cities "don't work because no one really believes they can."

Rouse believed in leading by example. As one resident explained, "He was a real leader, but not why everyone thinks. He would walk the streets with us. He demonstrated his commitment." Rouse maintained a unique web of ties that bound disparate people, institutions, and ideas together. His continuing presence seemed to mitigate difficulties and sustain belief in a wholesome, integrated outcome. Even NT's critics would say, "Did they really understand the vision of James Rouse?" when they disagreed with implementation decisions.

Rouse's death was a tremendous loss for NT, as it was in many other domains. Many Sandtown residents distrusted institutions, and it was hard for them to trust the mechanisms Rouse had put in place when he was no longer there. One woman put it this way: "When Rouse died, I wanted to leave. He had a big sense of self, but he was dedicated to service."

The kind of charismatic leadership that Jim Rouse embodied can rarely be institutionalized. In complex, ambitious ventures like NT, the person and the personal truly matter. Still, perhaps the most fitting comment about Rouse's influence refers not to him personally but to the lasting power of his vision and commitment. "What is amazing in all of this," observed a woman who has worked both inside and outside the project, "is that there is a resilience in this process to keep on trucking. There is still a belief that this can happen."

necessarily new to the field of community development. Nor were NT's implementers unaware of these insights. But they had to steer a difficult course between innumerable pressures and constraints. And, as some would say, "The knowledge that these things are out there is very different from internalizing that knowledge institutionally."

Nonetheless, NT's experience can teach the community development field a great deal about the requirements of comprehensive neighborhood change. Part of the learning has surely been about how much a comprehensive community initiative (CCI) can demand of its partners. The complexity of the Sandtown experience required profound changes in the assumptions, practices, staffing, and funding of mainstream institutions. It also forced stakeholders outside the community to recognize the real tensions and trade-offs that their decisions caused, to avoid oversimplifying the challenges, and to appreciate the contributions made by people at many different levels.

Part of what makes Sandtown-Winchester such a valuable laboratory is its longevity. Few funders take on projects as ambitious, and those who do often abandon the effort when it proves unexpectedly difficult. The city of Baltimore and The Enterprise Foundation, however, jumped right into the most important and difficult domestic policy challenge of our time, and they stuck with it for a full decade. Furthermore, they continue to identify new ways to support NT at each new stage. Enterprise, for example, combined its Baltimore and Neighborhood Transformation Center offices to bring all resources to bear on the challenges and opportunities facing Sandtown. It is committed to taking an honest look at the NT experience to find lessons both for the initiative and for the larger field.

A great deal more remains to be learned from NT. The challenge now for Enterprise, the city, and other public and private funders is to identify and distill the lessons, learn from them, own them, and act on them. They must think about the next five or ten years and set new goals, actions, and strategies for their work. In fact, the most important thing the partners can do might be to work through this process of questioning and answering.

In a recent issue of *Viewpoint*, Lawrence Cager, the head of Enterprise's combined office, spoke of NT's future. He noted the progress made over the past decade and the current need for partners to transform their own roles from decision makers to decision takers. Emphasizing the continued power of a comprehensive, inclusive approach, Cager stated that "everyone should be involved in this decision-making process—not just residents. . . . We need schools, the churches, the police. . . . We need everyone to take ownership of the community. We have all the resources. Now, people must commit their own resources such as time and energy." Placing the Sandtown experience within the broader field of community change, Cager concluded that "few communities have the experience and the expertise that people in Sandtown have. Therefore, the people should begin to see that they are, in fact, leaders."

The higher you shoot, the closer you come to something significant. Think big, because reality will inevitably tell you what is possible.

— JIM ROUSE

Enterprise, the city of Baltimore, and the residents of Sandtown-Winchester have a great deal to work with as they take on Cager's challenge. Sandtown today has a stronger institutional base than ever before; greater social and human capital; more seasoned leadership; better education, health, and housing; and an abiding belief in the possibility of change. Likewise, Enterprise has a diverse, mature, and extremely capable staff with deep knowledge and experience in Sandtown. The city's recent mayoral transition offers new opportunities for the partnership. And the lessons distilled in this report offer a context for moving forward.

Appendix I: Interviews Conducted for the Neighborhood Transformation Review

Timothy Armbruster
President
Baltimore Community Foundation
Morris Goldseker Foundation

Charles Armwood
Business Owner

Bill Batko
Director
Neighborhood Development Center

Peter Beilenson
Commissioner
Baltimore City Health Department

Diane Bell
Director
Empower Baltimore Management Corporation
(Former Special Assistant to Mayor Kurt Schmoke)

George Benjamin
Secretary of Health
Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Wanda Better-Davis
Principal
William Pinderhughes Elementary School

Barbara Bostick-Hunt
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YWCA of Greater Baltimore

Paul Brophy
Principal
Brophy and Reilly

Alice Carroway Brown
Self-Motivated Community People's Village Center

Channelle Cooper
Outreach Coordinator
Vision for Health

Pat Costigan
Former Director
Neighborhood Transformation

Father Damien Nalepa
St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church

Hakim Farrakhan
Deputy Commissioner
Baltimore City Health Department

Chickie Grayson
President
Enterprise Homes, Inc.

Sheila Greene
Clinical Instructor of Pediatrics and Well Mobile Manager
University of Maryland School of Nursing

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Jobs-Plus
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Community Care Network

Tony Hall
Former Consultant
Neighborhood Transformation

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Advance Federal Savings and Loan Association

Julia Hamilton
Center Director
Healthy Start, Inc.

Elder Harris
Chairman
Newborn Holistic Ministries, Inc.

Daniel Henson
Former Commissioner
Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development

Shigeyo Ibrahim
Director of Public Policy
Vision for Health

Craig Jernigan
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Neighborhood Development Center

Yvonne Johnson
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Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

Edward Kane, Jr.
Former Senior Program Director
The Enterprise Foundation

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Maryland State Department of Education
(Former Consultant, Neighborhood Transformation)

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Director
BGE Customer Communications Center
(Former Executive Director, Community Building in Partnership, Inc.)

General Seitu Mohammed
Chairman
Self-Motivated Community People's Village Center

Joann Osborne
President
Carrollton Avenue Community Association

Wy Plummer
Executive Director
EDEN Jobs

Emmanuel Price
Chief Executive Officer
Community Building in Partnership, Inc.

Prophet Noble Drew Ali
Moorish American Construction Company

Rey Ramsey
Former President
The Enterprise Foundation

Michael Randolph
Self-Motivated Community People's Village Center

Honorable Kurt L. Schmoke
Former Mayor
City of Baltimore

Ralph Smith
Vice President
Annie E. Casey Foundation

Laverne Stokes
Co-Executive Director
Sandtown Habitat for Humanity

Melanie Styles
Former Program Director/Evaluation
The Enterprise Foundation

Allan Tibbels
Co-Executive Director
Sandtown Habitat for Humanity

Tina Thompson
President
Fulton Community Association

Gary Thrift
Area Superintendent
Baltimore City Public Schools

Athena Young
Chair, Board of Directors
Sandtown-Winchester Community Development Corporation

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Lamont Coger

Jerry Cross

Davon Fair

Craig Jernigan

Norman Yancy

Athena Young

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